

THE  
REMAINS  
OF THE  
REVEREND and LEARNED  
M<sup>r</sup> John Corbet,  
Late of *Chichester*.

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*Printed from his own Manuscripts.*

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L O N D O N :

Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three  
Crowns in Cheap-side, near Mercers Chappel, 1684.

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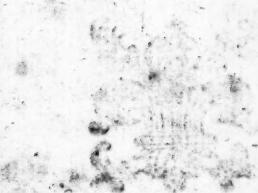
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A N  
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TO THE  
READER.

**H**ERE thou hast the Remains of the Reverend and Learned Mr. Corbet late of Chichester; Those that knew him say, That he was a man endued with the wisdom that is from above, that is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, (meek, moderate,) and easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality; without hypocrisie. Therefore it is conceived that any thing which he had designed for publick use, may be well accepted of, by all those that desire to follow after peace with all men, so far as is consistent with purity. Whether the design of these Remains of his be ~~not~~ to vindicate the truth, and to promote purity first, and then peace, is left to thee to judg, after thou hast impartially perused and considered them in the

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fear of God; and if in any measure they con-  
duce to so good an end, it is hoped thou wilt be  
thankful to God for the benefit which the Church  
of Christ, and therein thy self, mayst receive by  
the use of them. Thou hast them just as they were  
left under his own hand; if himself had lived  
to publish them, thou mightest possibly have had  
them better Polisht: but it is not thought fit  
that any other person should take upon him to  
alter any thing in them.

There are printed of this Authors, and sold by  
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on Self-Examination.  
Thoughts upon painful Afflictions.  
Memorials for Practice.

# OF THE CHURCH.

## § 1. *Of the Church and Ministry, as related to each other.*

**W**HETHER the Church, or the Ministry be first in nature, is to be considered ; that for the more orderly, handling of both, we may know which of them to begin with. For that seems to require the precedency of handling, that hath the priority of nature ; or the being whereof, is presupposed to the being of the other. Now some have thus resolved it : As the question whether the Hen or the Egg be first, is resolved by the Creation, That God made the Hen first ; so is the Question, Whether the Church or Ministry be first, by the consideration of the first Institution of Christ ; And it appears that the Ministry was first Instituted, or at least that it was first in existence. In setting up the Christian Church, Christ set up the Ministry first, to convert men, or make them Christians. Moreover, the Ministry, as taken for the collective body of Ministers, is a constitutive part of the Church, considered not *entitative*, but *organice*, (as some Phrase the distinction) ; that is, not as a meer company of Believers gathered to Christ, but as a Political Society, or Spiritual Commonwealth in this World. And the Constitutive parts should be distinctly treated of, before the Whole that is constituted of them.

On the other hand, the Church is the end of the Ministry, *Eph. 4. 11.* and in design or intention, before it; and consequently the Ministry hath a respect of subserviency to the Church, and is Adapted to the state thereof. Likewise the Ministry is in the Church, as the lesser in the greater, as a part in the whole; as a thing residing, in the seat of its residence; as Stewardship in a Family. This indeed holds principally and perpetually of the Church Universal, *1 Cor. 12. 28.* Moreover, the Ministers power and vertue is theirs, as they are the Churches, which indeed hath the propriety of them, and their Ministerial gifts, as being all under God and Christ, finally for its behoof. Upon these considerations I shall discourse first of the Church, and then of the Ministry,

## § 2. Of the Church, its Name and Nature.

THE word *Ecclesia*, is noted to signifie, 1. An Assembly called together by a Superior. 2. Any multitude gathered into one place. 3. According to the use of the holy Scripture, a certain multitude, that retain the Name, as well when they are a part, as when they are met together. An Assembly at large is called *Ecclesia*, but *Appellative*; but they that are now so called by special appropriation of the word, are a Society standing in a special Relation to God, as his devoted People; and that both when they are assembled, and when they are apart; and whether they be the Universal Society of Gods People, or the particular Societies that are the integral parts of the Universal.

The word Church is the English of *Ecclesia*, in its appropriated signification; and it is taken divers ways, but all agreeing in the aforesaid Notion: 1. For the whole Company of Gods Elect, comprising the uncalled, and the Militant, and the Triumphant, *Eph. 5. 25, 26.* 2. For the whole Company of the faithful, both Militant and Triumphant, *Col. 1. 18. Heb. 12. 23.* 3. For all professors of the Faith of Christ, or visible Christians, *Acts 5. 11. Acts 8. 3. Acts 12. 1.* 4. For the *Catholick* Visible Church as a political Society, *1 Cor. 12. 28.* 5. For the particular Churches, parts of the *Catholick*, as comprising



prising the Church-Officers, and the people or Community of the faithful, as the Church at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *The Churches of Galatia*, *Gal.* 1. 2. and in many other places. 6. For the members of the Church or Community of the faithful, as distinct from their spiritual Rulers, *Acts* 15. 4, 22. 7. For the Governours of the Church, as distinct from the governed, *Mat.* 18. 17, 18, 19. 8. For a Church-Assembly come together for Divine Worship, 1 *Cor.* 14. 19, 34. 9. For the faithful in some one family, *Rom.* 16. 5. *Philem.* 2. if it do not signifie a Church meeting in those houses. These several acceptions of the word agree in the said common Notion, of a number of People associated in a peculiar and Spiritual Relation to God; yet the said Notion is more noble and compleat in some of them, than in others.

Besides all these, there is the vulgar use of the Word, for the House set apart for the Church to meet in for Gods Publick Worship. And no doubt but the Word may be lawfully so used; it being a trope in ordinary use, to put the name of the persons contained, upon the place containing; as also, the name of the place containing, upon the persons contained: But that there is any such use of the word in Holy Scripture, to me is not evident. As for the Text, 1 *Cor.* 11. 22. *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or, despise ye the Church of God?* it seems not to me, to be inferred from it: For the Church of God there said to be despised, may be understood rather of Gods People assembled.

### § 3. *The Church is a Society distinct from the Commonwealth.*

**I**T hath been well noted, That there can be no greater Evidence of real distinction, than actual separation. And the Church and Commonwealth are separate; wheresoever there is a Christian Church in a Commonwealth, that is not Christian, indeed in that Case the Christians taken personally, are members, not severed from the Commonwealth, but parts of it; but the Spiritual Society, which they make, is no part of it, but really severed from it.

When a Commonwealth becomes Christian, the Church is not to be looked upon as swallowed up in the Commonwealth, but they remain distinct Societies, notwithstanding the intimate conjunction that is between them; and they differ in their kind and formal state from each other. The foundation upon which the Commonwealth rests, and its constitutive parts formally taken, are of another nature than the foundation on which the Church rests, and its constitutive parts formally taken. The former is immediately founded in humane Laws, and Compacts, and Essentially made up of several orders and ranks of men diversly indued with temporal qualifications, powers and liberties, joyned by Civil Bands, and Subordinate one to another; but the latter is immediately founded in Divine Laws, not only natural, but positive; and Essentially made up of several orders and ranks of men, spiritually distinguished, and indued with spiritual qualifications, Powers and Liberties, joyned by Spiritual Bands, and Subordinate one to another. Hereupon none become Members of the Church, merely as Members of the Commonwealth; and none become *Cives* or Members of the Commonwealth, merely as Members of the Church; and they that are deprived of the Rights of the Commonwealth, may still enjoy the Priviledges of the Church; and they that are deprived of the Priviledges of the Church, may still enjoy the Rights of the Commonwealth.

Indeed a Christian Commonwealth, ultimately intends those high and excellent ends, which the Church doth nextly and immediately, *viz.* The Glory of God, and the Eternal happiness of men; and procures the same in its own way, as the Church doth in its way. And the Magistrates and Officers of a Commonwealth must proceed by the Rules of Christianity in their Civil Administrations, as well as the Ministers of the Church in their Sacred Administrations; and they are the Servants of Christ the Mediator, not only as Christians, but as Magistrates. And Christianity doth influence its professors, considered as Members of the Commonwealth, as well as of the Church.

In these respects, such a Commonwealth hath attained a more excellent State, and exists in a more perfect mode, than other Commonwealths. Nevertheless the Church is another and higher thing than that higher mode of the Commonwealth as Christi-  
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an, and hath an Essentially different Polity, being a Society of another foundation, and specifically different Constitution.

It is questionable (to say the least), whether the Civil Power of the Commonwealth, and the Spiritual Power of the Christian Church, may lawfully reside in the same person. I do not now speak of that Power in the Church, which is objectively Ecclesiastical, but formally Civil, (such as is the Kings Supremacy in all Causes and over all Persons Ecclesiastical, within his Dominions); but of Power formally Spiritual. And if both Spiritual and Civil Power, may lawfully reside in the same person; yet that person, tho naturally but one, would be politically two, and the People subordinate to him in those two capacities; tho they be the same persons, yet they would be two Societies distinguished in their Essential forms.

When the Commonwealth fails, the Church may still subsist; and when the Church fails, the Commonwealth may still subsist. The Commonwealth of the *Jews*, that was a *Theocracy*, suffered an Intercision during the *Babylonish* Captivity; yet their Church then remained; tho it were greatly wounded, it was not extinct. And afterwards when they were no Commonwealth of themselves, but a Province of the *Roman* Empire, their Ecclesiastical Society and Polity stood intire, till it was to give place to the Christian Church.

#### § 4. *Of the Church, as Visible and Invisible.*

THE notion of Visible and Invisible, must not here be taken strictly for that which is, or is not the object of seeing only, but of other sensitive perception, or of any humane intuition. All other Societies of men admit not this distinction, because they are constituted in their formal being, by things that do appear outwardly. But this of the Church is constituted in its formal being, *primarily* by things that in themselves do not appear outwardly; and but *secondarily* by things that appear, as expressions of the things that in themselves appear not.

The Church is a Society of regenerate persons joyned to the Lord Christ as their Head, and to one another as fellow-members, by a mystical union, through the Holy Ghost residing in them all; and through faith unfeigned towards God in Christ, and holy love toward one another, justified, sanctified and adopted to the inheritance of Eternal Glory. Now the said Qualifications, Relations, and Priviledges being in themselves hid from mens knowledg and judgment, do primarily constitute the Church, which is thereupon in its primary consideration, a Society Mystical and Invisible.

It is also a Society of persons professing Christianity or Regeneration, and externally joyned to Christ, and to one another by the profession of unfeigned faith and love, and by the Symbols of that profession, and partakers of the external Priviledges belonging to it: And according to this external Constitution, which is necessary, tho it be not primary, it is named Visible.

So then the Church Invisible and Visible, are not two Societies; but the same Society distinguished by its divers formal considerations and constitutions; the one *primary*, the other *secondary*; and the former is not for the latter, but the latter for the former.

These two distinct considerations, or modes or forms of the same Society, are not commensurate to each other; but the Church in its Visible form is of a larger extent than in its Invisible form. For many profess Christianity, or Dedication to God in Christ, that are not really, that is, heartily and intirely so dedicated.

This Society, as understood in the compleat notion thereof, cannot be extended any further then its *primary*, that is, its Invisible form doth reach. Whatsoever lies without that compass, is but the shadow without the substance, the image without the life thereof. And therefore all they that are joyned to it meerly according to its Visible form, are of it not adequately, univocally and simply, but inadequately, analogically, & *secundum quid*.

They that upon their credible profession are of this Society but analogically, as to the external form only, have just Right and Title to its external Priviledges, according to their capacity and disposedness, before them that can discern and directly  
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judg only of things that appear outwardly; so that if men deny them of those Priviledges, they do them wrong. For tho God allows them not, and they have no right in his judgment, which is always according to truth, and not bare appearance; yet he hath commanded men to admit them, and consequently given them right before men.

Credible profession, in whatsoever degree, higher or lower, can ground but a judgment of charity in a higher or lower degree, about ones part in this Society according to its Invisible form; yet it can ground a judgment of certainty about ones part in the same according to its Visible form. So that altho God only knows those whom he accepts; yet the Church may know certainly whom she ought to admit. And as God in the matter belonging to his cognizance, to wit, the sincerity of profession, and the rights consequent thereunto; so the Church in the matter belonging to its cognizance, to wit, the credibility of profession, and the rights consequent thereunto, proceeds upon certain knowledge.

### § 5. *Of the Catholick Church Invisible and Visible.*

**I**T hath been well observed, That the term *Catholick Church*, hath been sometimes used of a particular Church holding the true Doctrine of the Apostles, and is the same with Apostolical; and in this sence, any Bishop of a true Apostolical Church, may be called a *Catholick Bishop*. But here the term *Catholick* signifies the same with Oecumenical, or the Church that is throughout the whole World, or the whole World of Christians. And in this sence, the Church is termed *Catholick*, not as actually extending to the whole World; but potentially, no Nation or People being excluded, but all having Liberty to accept and enjoy the Priviledges thereof.

In this notion there is one *Catholick Church*, both in the Invisible and Visible form. The *Catholick Church Invisible*, is the whole company of true Believers throughout the World, who make that part of Christs Mystical Body, which is militant:



tant here on Earth. The *Catholick Church Visible*; is the whole company of Visible believers, throughout the World, or believers according to humane judgment.

§ 6. *The Unity of the Catholick Church Visible.*

**T**HE *Catholick Church* is not only notionally, but really existent, and hath Relation to particular Churches, as an integral whole, to integral parts. The same relation it hath also to particular Christians; yea, and to such as are not fixed members of a particular Church.

There being one peculiar Kingdom of Christ, throughout the World, distinct from the World in general, visibly constituted and administr'd, not by humane Laws, and Coercive Power, as Secular Kingdoms are; but by Divine Laws and Power directly and purely respecting the conscience, there must needs be one *Catholick Visible Church*.

The *Catholick Church* in its Visible form, is one political Society, or Spiritual Commonwealth, the City of God, the more special Kingdom of Christ upon Earth; for the World in general is his Kingdom at large.

The Unity of the *Catholick Church* being a political Society, ariseth not out of a local contiguity, but out of the moral and political Union of the parts.

And if the Invisible Church be one body, the Visible must be so likewise. For these terms, the Church Visible and Invisible, do not signifie two Societies (as hath been shew'd); but the same Society distinguished by its diver considerations.

The Visible *Catholick Church* hath one Head and Supreme Lord, even Christ; one Charter and Systeme of Laws, Members that are free denizens of the whole Society, one form of admission, or solemn initiation for all its Members; one Spiritual polity, or one Divine form of Government, and one kind of Ecclesiastical Power.

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The members of one particular Church are intituled to the privileges granted of God to visible Christians in any other Church, wheresoever they come to be enjoyed by them according to their capacity, and in a due order: And wheresoever any Christian comes as a stranger, he is by his relation to the Universal Church, bound to have communion with the particular Church or Churches of that place in Gods ordinances, according to his capacity and opportunity. And if it be said, he is looked upon as a transient member of that particular Church, where he comes as a stranger: I answer, that it ariseth from his being a member of the Catholick Church, which contains all particular Churches, as an integral whole, its several parts; for it is his right, and not a favour or a matter of mere charity.

Whosoever is justly and orderly cast out of one Church, is thereby virtually cast out of all Churches, and ought to be received by none. This cannot be meerly by compact among the Churches, or by the mutual relation of mere concordant or sister Churches, but by their being integral parts of one society, for the ejection out of all (*de jure*) follows naturally, necessarily, *ipso facto*, from the ejection out of one.

The Apostles were general officers of the whole Catholick Church as of one visible society: And it is not to be imagined, that it lost its unity by their death. The ordinary Pastors and Teachers, tho actually and in exercise overseeing their own parts, are habitually and radically related to the whole Catholick Church, and thereby are enabled to exercise their ministerial authority in any other parts, wheresoever they come, without a new ordination, or receiving a new pastoral authority, so that they do it in a due order. This shews that the several Churches are parts of one political society, otherwise the officers could not act authoritatively out of their own particular congregation, no more than ( as one well observes ) a Mayor or Constable can exercise their offices in other Corporations.

§ 7. *The Priority in nature of the Catholick Church to particular Churches.*

**F**Orasmuch as men are Christians in order of nature before they are members of a particular Church, and ministers in general before they are ministers of a particular Church, they are members and ministers first of the Catholick Church in order of nature, and then of particular Churches. And the Charter and Body of Laws and Ordinances by which the Church subsists, doth first belong to the Catholick Church, and then to particular Churches as parts thereof.

To be a member of a particular congregation, gives only the opportunity of enjoying divine ordinances and Church privileges; but immediate right thereunto is gained by being a visible believer, or a member of the Church Catholick.

One may be a member of the Church Catholick, and yet not a fixed member of any particular Church, and that in some cases necessarily, and in that state he hath right to Gods ordinances.

The Ethiopian Eunuch was of no particular Church, and yet baptized by Philip.

The Promises, Sacraments and Precepts of Christ are dispensed by his Minister to the members of his Church primarily, not as members of a particular, but of the universal Church: And therefore the Minister dispenseth the same with authority in Christs Name even to strangers that come into his Congregation.

§ 8. *The Visibility of the Catholick Church.*

**A**S a large Empire is visible to the eye of sense, not in the whole at one view, but in the several parts one after another; so is the Catholick Church:

As a large Empire is visible in the whole at one view by an act of the understanding, which is the eye of the mind; so is the Catholick Church.

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As the unity of a large Empire is not judged invisible, because it cannot be seen without an act of the understanding, no more may the unity of the Catholick Church be for that reason judged invisible.

I have already shewed that the adequate notion of visible and invisible in this subject, is to be not only the object of the bodily eye or other external sense, but also of any humane institution or certain perception, or that which falls under humane cognizance and judgment.

## § 2. The Polity of the Catholick Church.

THE Catholick Church is not (as secular Kingdoms or Commonwealths are) antinomical; that is, having within it self that Power of its own fundamental constitution, and of the laws and officers and administrations belonging to it, as a Church or spiritual polity; but it hath received all these from Christ, its Head, King and Law giver. Indeed as it includes Christ the Head, it is in reference to him antinomical; but here we consider it as a political Body visible upon earth, and abstracted from its Head.

Nevertheless it hath according to the capacity of its acting, that is, in its several parts, a power of secondary Laws or Canons either to impress the Laws of Christ upon its members, or to regulate circumstances and accidentals in Religion, by determining things necessary, *genera*, and not determined by Christ himself, but left to humane determination.

The spiritual authority seated in the Church is not seated in the Church, as Catholick, so as to descend from it by way of derivation and communication to particular Churches; but it is immediately seated in the several particular Churches as similar parts of one political Body the Church Catholick.

The Church Catholick is as one universal, or Oecumenical Kingdom, having one Supreme Lord, one Body of Laws, one form of Government, one way of Enrolment into it, and subjects who have freedom throughout the whole extent thereof, and radically and fundamentally always, and according to be used according to their occasions and capacities, but

having no Terrene Universal Administrator or Vicegerent personal or collective, but several administrators in the several provinces or parts thereof, invested with the same kind of authority respecting the whole kingdom radically or fundamentally, but to be exercised ordinarily in their own stated limits, and occasionally any where else according to a due call and order.

Wherefore tho it be one political society, yet not so as to have one terrestrial vicarious Head, personal or collective, having legislation and jurisdiction over the whole. And indeed no terrestrial Head is capable of the Government; and Christ the Supream Head and Lord being powerfully present throughout the whole by his spirit, causeth that such a vicarious Head is not wanted.

Indeed the Apostles as such were universal officers, having Apostolick authority not only radically or habitually, but actually also over the whole Catholick Church in regard they were divinely inspired, and immediately commissioned by Christ under him to erect his Church, and to establish his religion, even the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government that was to be received by all Christians: But this office was but temporary in the nature and formal reason of it, and so expired with their persons, and was not of the essence, or a constitutive part of this society.

#### §. 20. *The Headship of a General Council examined.*

**B**y Headship over the Church in this inquiry, is not meant a dominion and Despotick power over it; for the Church hath no Lord but Christ, nor sovereign authority over it, which is the power of legislation and final decisive judgment, by which men stand or fall finally; for the Church hath no King but Christ. I exclude Headship in any such sense, as not fit to come under consideration.

But the Query is, Whether a general Council be supream in that kind of power which resides in the Church, and is only ministerial and dispensatory; that is, whether it hath a supream ministry or Oeconomy over the Catholick Church, To that all Churches and ministers have their power conveyed to them from the same, not as from the Fountain (which is Christ alone) but as from the first receptacle



ceptacle thereof, and are subject to its authoritative regulation and determinations, and finally accountable to it for their administrations.

Who can affirm, that an Oecumenical council rightly so named, was ever in being? The councils that have born that name, were conventions of Bishops within the Roman Empire, except some very few that were without it, and those living near the confines of it. Whereupon let it be considered, whether the said councils were truly Oecumenical, or just representatives of the Catholick Church.

That which is wont to be said for the affirmative is, that no Bishops were excluded from the right of voting therein, but from all parts of the world they might come to them as rightful members of them, if they would.

But what if no greater number of Bishops meet upon a summons to a General council, than did at the council of *Trent*? May such a convention be called an Oecumenical council because all might come that would, when so small a number came as was comparatively nothing to the number of bishops throughout the world? Or can the convention of a greater number, suppose as many as met in the first *Nicene* council, be justly called a representative of the Catholick Church, or carry the sense of it, when it bears no more proportion to it? Surely it is not their freedom of access, but their actual convening at least, in a proportionable number, that can justly give the denomination.

And what if the bishops without the limits of the Roman Empire would not come to a General council called by the Mandate of the Roman Emperour, especially they that lived in the remoter parts, as *Ethiopia and India*, &c? Were they obliged to come to a general council (in case it had been summoned) in another, especially a remoter Empire or Dominion? Moreover, what if they could not come (which may well be supposed) by reason of the restraint of their several Princes, or the length of the journey, or insuperable difficulties, or utter incapacities?

Tho' the most illustrious part of the Catholick Church was contained in the Roman Empire, yet an assembly of the bishops thereof could no more make a representative of the Catholick Church, than an assembly of the bishops of the other part of the world without them could have done, if there had been such an assembly.

Besides the ancient General councils were usually called in the Eastern parts of the Empire; and tho' the bishops of those parts might convene in a considerable number, yet the number from the Western parts was inconsiderable, and as none, comparatively to a just proportion. Let it be hereupon considered, whether the said councils were a just representative, and did carry the sence of that part of the Catholick Church that was included in that Empire. And in this consideration it is not of little moment to observe what numbers of bishops were ordinarily congregated in the many provincial assemblies, and that within provinces of narrower circuits of ground.

And how doth it appear that an Oecumenical council, rightly so named, can be? For suppose it be not necessary to consist of all the bishops in the world, but of some as delegates in the name of all, yet it must consist of so many proportionably delegated from all in the severall quarters, as may signifie the sence and consent of all.

Hereupon let it be considered, whether there be a possibility of such assemblies; much more whether there be a possibility of the continuation, or of the succession of them in such frequency as would be requisite in case such an assembly were Head of the Church.

Nor doth it stand with reason, that an Oecumenical council, in case it were existent, can possibly execute the authority that belongs to the head of the Universal Church, in overseeing all, in receiving appeals from all, in making authoritative determinations for all, either immediately by it self, or mediately by subordinate councils, judicatories, and ministers, to be superintended, regulated and determined by it in their proceedings.

Nor is there any notice given of the said headship of a General council, more than of the Popes or any other bishops universall headship in the primitive and authentick records of the Charter that Christ hath given to his Church, to wit, the Holy Scriptures. Nor is any rule given therein for the constitution of a General council, whether it shall be made up only of the Clergy, or only of such bishops as are of the higher order, than Bishops, or of all such bishops of the Catholick Church, or of some of the name of all, what number there must be, either definite or indefinite, and proportionate to the number of those that are represented.

It is evident *de facto*, that the officers of the Catholick Church, as the particular bishops or pastors, and the associations and conventions of them, do not derive their spiritual authority from a General council: Nor doth it appear that *de jure* they should derive their power from it, any more than from the Pope.

## § 11. *The infallibility of the Catholick Church examined.*

**T**HE Romanists assert an infallibility about matters of faith somewhere seated within the Catholick Church as the perpetual priviledg thereof; some of them place it in the Pope, and others in a General council. Hereupon this priviledg is to be considered, whether it be, and what it is.

The meaning of the term, is a being not liable to be deceived, or to deceive, about those matters about which it is said to be.

That the catholick church is infallible in the essentials of the christian religion is a most indubitable truth; for every member of the catholick church so remaining, is infallible so far; it involves a contradiction that any such should err therein, for it were as much as to be a christian and no christian.

The Query therefore is, whether it be liable to error in the integrals and accidentals of Religion? Now the church remaining such, is not necessarily or in its nature infallible so far, and therefore if it be infallible, it must be so from the free grant of Christ; But it doth not appear in the Holy Scripture that any such grant is made to the church.

What was the Apostles doctrine, and consequently the doctrine of the Church in their days, obedient to their authority, we know; what the church universally held in any one age touching all the integral parts of religion, much more concerning accidentals, I conceive extremely difficult, if not impossible to be known. But that the church hath *de facto*, if not universally, yet very generally erred in the same error about some integrals of religion, appears by the ancient general practise of some things, now generally accounted erroneous; as for instance, the giving of the Lords Supper to infants.

Moreover,

Moreover it is evident, that the whole Church in its several parts hath erred, some in one point, some in another; and that no part thereof hath been found in which hath appeared no error in some point of Religion or other. And if all the parts may variously err in several points, why may not they also harmoniously err all of them in one and the same point?

If the Catholick Church be not infallible in all doctrines of Faith, much less is any such Council infallible as was ever yet congregated, or is ever like to be congregated.

Hereupon it follows, that in all Controversies of doctrine we cannot stand finally to the decision of the Catholick Church, if it were possible to be had; or to the decision of any the largest Council that can possibly convene.

We cannot tell what the Catholick Church is, nor what particular Churches or persons are sound parts thereof, but by the holy Scriptures. For what *Criterion* can be brought besides them? Mens bare testimony of themselves is not to be rested on. How can we know that the first *Nicene* Council was orthodox in its determination about the Sacred Trinity, and the second *Nicene* Council erroneous in its determination for Image-worship, but by finding that the former was consonant, and the latter dissonant to the Scripture in their afore said determinations?

If it be said, That of Councils called General, those that consist of greater numbers of bishops must carry it against those that consist of lesser numbers; let some proof either from Scripture or Reason be given for it. What ground is there from either to conclude, that in the time of the *Arrian* Heresie the major part of bishops in the *Roman* Empire, or the major part of those that assembled in Council, and for instance in the first Council at *Nice*, might not possibly have been *Arrians*? Moreover if the major part were to carry it in the first six Centuries, why not also in the ten last?

That promise of Christ, Mat. 28. *I am with you always to the end of the world*, may imply, That there shall be a successive continuation of Bishops or Pastors in the Catholick Church to the worlds end, that shall be Orthodox in the Essentials, yea and in the Integrals of Religion; yet it doth not imply that they shall be the greater number of those that are called and reputed bishops or pastors within Christendom, nor that the greater number of those being convened in Councils, shall not err in their Conciliar determinations about matters of Faith.

## § 12. *Of the Indefectibility of the Catholick Church.*

**C**HRI<sup>ST</sup> hath promised the perpetuity of the Church in general, in saying that he would build it on a Rock; and the gates of Hell should not prevail against it; and *I am with you always to the end of the world*; but how far, and in what respect it is perpetuity and indefectibility is promised, ought to be enquired into, lest we expect or insist upon more than the promise hath ensured.

That which Christ hath promised, cannot be less, than that there be always upon earth a number of true believers, or faithful Christians, made visible by their external profession of Christianity, successively continued till the end of all things.

It is also ascertained, that there shall be at least the essentials of a Church-state, or Church organical (as some express it) consisting of a part governing, and a part governed, always continued somewhere upon earth. For Christs promise is to be with his Apostles in the executing of their Ministry, always, to the end of the world; and it must be understood of them not barely considered, as persons; but as his commissioned Officers, including their successors not in the Apostolical and Temporary, but in the ordinary and perpetual Authority, which they had in common with Pastors, Bishops or Presbyters. And *Eph. 4. 11.* shews, that the Ministry is to endure till the whole Mystical body of Christ be completed.

But the promise doth not import, that any particular Church, or any particular combination of Churches in one frame of Ecclesiastical Polity, how ample or illustrious soever, shall be perpetuated by an uninterrupted succession of Pastors, and secured from a total defection and rejection either from a Church-state, or from Christianity it self.

If any particular church, or any one larger part of the Catholick church, hath been preserved from the Apostles days till now, when others have been extinct, it is by the good pleasure of God; whose ways and counsels are wise and holy, yet unsearchable and past finding out.



• Nor doth the promise import, that the true church shall be perpetually conspicuous, tho it be perpetually visible : for in some Ages it may be more obscure, in others more apparent. It is granted by that party that much insists upon the conspicuousness of their church, as a city on a hill, That in the time of Antichrist the church shall scarcely be discerned. Now in such a state it may be said to be, tho not absolutely, yet comparatively invisible, that is, being compared with what it is when more conspicuously Visible.

Nor doth it import that any particular church, or any most ample and illustrious part of the Catholick church, shall perpetually abide in the Apostolick purity of doctrine, worship, and government ; but that it may depart from it, and fall into most enormous errors and practices in the said points, and yet may not lose the essentials of Christian doctrine, and church-state. The Scripture foretels of a great falling away, and a lasting defection in the Christian church, and a long continued predominancy of an Antichristian state therein.

Nay, for ought can be cogently inferred from the aforesaid promise, the said defection might have been so universal, as to leave no part of the Catholick church divided from the Apostatical or Antichristian state and party, by a different external church-polity; but the sound and sincere part of the Church may truckle under it and be included in its external frame, and keep themselves from being destroyed by it, some of them discerning and shunning the baneful doctrine and practice; and others that are infected with it, holding the truth predominantly in their hearts and lives, and so tho not speculatively yet practically prevailing against the wicked errors.

If in all times there have been some societies of Christians that did not fall away in the great defection, nor incorporate with the antichristian state; but were by themselves in a severed church-state; yet Christ hath not promised that there shall be notice thereof throughout all Christendom in the times when the said societies were in being, nor that histories should be written thereof for the knowledge of after ages.

Howbeit we have sufficient notice by credible history, that there have been many ample christian churches throughout all ages that were not incorporated with the antichristian state, and that did dissent from their great enormities in Doctrine, Worship, and Government ;

vernment; also that many Worthies living in the midst of that great apostacy, did during the whole time thereof successively bear witness for the truth against it, and that for a great part of the time huge multitudes also living in the midst of the said apostacy, separated from it, and were embodied into churches of another constitution more conformable to the Primitive Christianity.

§ 13. *The frame of the particular Churches mentioned in Scripture.*

**A**S we find in Scripture one Catholick church related as one Kingdom, Family, Flock, Spouse and Body, to Christ as its only King, Master, Shepherd, Husband and Head; so we find particular churches, as so many political societies distinct from each other, yet all compacted together as parts of that one ample Society the Catholick church; as the church at *Antioch*, Acts 13. 1. the church at *Jerusalem*, Acts 11. 22. Acts 15. 4. the church at *Cesarea*, Acts 18. 22. the church at *Cenchrea*, Rom. 16. 1. the church at *Corinth*, 1 Cor. 1. 2 the churches of *Galatia*, Gal. 1. 2. the church of the *Thessalonians*, 1 Thes. 1. 1. the church at *Babylon*, 1 Pet. 5. 13. and the seven churches in *Asia*, Apoc. 1. & 2. viz. of *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamos*, *Thyatira*, *Sardis*, *Philadelphia*, and *Laodicea*.

We likewise find that the Christians of a city, or lesser precinct, made one church; as the church at *Corinth*, the church at *Cenchrea*, &c. but the Christians of a Region or a larger circuit, made many churches, as the churches of *Asia*, the churches of *Galatia*.

We find also, that each of these particular churches did consist of a part governing, and a part governed; and consequently were political Societies. Every church had their proper Elder or Elders, Acts 14. 23. which Elders were the same with Bishops, Acts 20. 28. Tit. 1. 5, 7. 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2. and they were constitutive parts of those churches, considered as Political Societies.

We find also that these Elders or Bishops did personally superintend or oversee all the Flock, or every member of the church over which they did preside, Acts 20. 28, 29. 1 Thes. 5. 12. Heb. 13. 17. This appears further by their particular work expressly

mentioned in Scripture to be personally performed towards all, viz. to be the ordinary Teachers of all, *Heb.* 13. 7. *1 Thes.* 5. 12, 13. to admonish all that were unruly, and to rebuke them openly, *1 Tim.* 5. 20. *Tit.* 1. 10. to visit and pray with the sick, and all the sick were to send for them to that end, *James* 5. 14. and no grant from Christ to discharge the same by Substitutes or Delegates can be found.

#### § 14. *The Form of a particular Church considered.*

FROM the premises it is evident, That all particular churches mentioned in the New Testament, were so constituted, as that all the members thereof were capable of personal communion in worshipping God, if not always at once together, yet by turns at least, and of living under the present personal superintendency of their proper Elder or Elders, Bishop or Bishops.

Whether to be embodied or associated for personal communion in worship, and for personal superintendency of the Pastors over all the members, be the true formal or essential constitution of particular churches by divine right, I leave to consideration. But this is evident, that all those churches that the Scripture takes notice of, were so constituted, and that either by the immediate agency of the Apostles themselves, *Acts* 14. 23 or of others by their appointment. *Tit.* 1. 5. Yet I do not hereby mean that every Congregation or Assembly for worship or acts of government, was a whole political church. For some such congregations might be only parts of a church meeting according to convenience; but still the said personal communion was in the whole church *simul* or *per vices*, and there was a personal superintendency of the Bishop or Pastor over the whole in all the acts of his Pastoral office.

As for such a particular church as consists of many ( it may be several hundred ) stated congregations, having each of them their proper Presbyter or Pre-byters, and is governed by one sole Bishop, the aforesaid Presbyters being said to be no Bishops, and whose members are not capable of personal communion among them-

themselves either *simul* or *per vices*, nor of the personal superintendency of their Bishop in the necessary acts of his Pastoral Office; if there be any Scripture-precedent or divine Rule for the same, I am ready to take notice of it.

§ 15. *The due place of constituting a particular Church.*

Ordinarily the place of a particular church was a City, and from the City the church ordinarily took its denomination. Nevertheless, nothing is found in Scripture to make a City the only proper Mansion of a church, so that no Village could be a fit Receptacle of it; yea, the Scripture mentions a church which was not a City-church, *viz.* that at *Cenchrea*, which was not a City, but the Haven of *Corinth*.

Cities being places of the confluence of people, had ordinarily the Gospel first preached, and first received in them, and consequently first afforded the materials of a church. And they were the fittest places for the erection of a church in order to the making of more converts to be added to them, besides other conveniences. And therefore right Reason, without a particular Divine command, would direct those Master-builders the Apostles to erect churches in cities.

Howbeit the City-churches were not confined to the respective cities, but commonly took in all the Christians of the adjacent Villages. And in the Apostles times the Christians both of a city and its adjacent Villages, did ordinarily but make up one competent congregation, or in its numbers it did not exceed one of our parishes. Tho some very few churches quickly grew numerous, yet most rationally it may be conceived, that they did not exceed many, nor equal some of our very populous Parishes.

Here it must be considered, that *πόλις* or a city, was any Town corporate, and that every such that had Christians in any competent number, had a stated church in it. And the Rule was not then, as now, that the church and its bishop did make that a city which otherwise would not be; but that every city or town corporate, or place of confluence of people, where there were christians, should have its church with its proper bishop.

§ 16. *Each particular Church is a distinct Political Society.*

**A**S Cities in a Kingdom, so are particular churches in the church universal. This similitude holds in the main, but not in all respects. As a whole Kingdom hath its fundamental Constitution by which it subsists, and its *Magna Charta* for privileges belonging to the whole; so the church universal hath its fundamental constitution and charter by which it subsists in its proper state. And as every city is a distinct body-politick under the King, and hath from him its charter by which it subsists; so every particular church as a distinct political Society under Christ, hath its charter from him, by which it subsists in its proper state.

The erecting of particular churches as several political societies by the Apostles, who were Christs authorized Agents for erecting his special Kingdom the church, and guided therein by his infallible spirit, and by others at their direction, and according to the same Rule, is a sufficient Charter for the constitution of such churches wherever there are fit materials. Besides, the law of nature requires the parcelling the church universal into such distinct Societies under their proper Pastors, that church-communion and Pastoral superintendency might not be transient and uncertain, but permanent and certain.

The several cities in the same Kingdom may have their special Laws and Privileges divers from each other, according to the diversity of their charters granted by the King. But particular churches have not municipal laws and privileges divers from each other, but the same in common to them all, because they have all the same charter *in specie*. Here note, that they may be rightly called distinct Political Societies, that have each of them their own charter, tho it be not divers, but the same in kind among them all.

He that is a citizen or a Magistrate of one city, is not a citizen, Magistrate, or Officer in all cities of the same Kingdom. But a member or a Pastor of one particular church, hath an habitual or fundamental Right of being a member or Pastor in any particular church throughout the world, which is not actually to be made



made use of but in a due order, as hath been above noted.

Particular churches, tho they consist of dissimilar parts, are all of them similar parts of the Church Catholick, partaking of its name and nature, whereas cities are dissimilar parts of a Kingdom.

From these premises it follows, that the qualifications requisite to make men members or ministers of the universal church, do sufficiently qualify them to be members or ministers of any particular church wherewith they are naturally capable of Communion.

### § 17. *Of the local bounds of Churches.*

**A**LL the Christians in the world are one holy society; and if it were possible they should have local presential communion one with another; but that being impossible by reason of the large extent of the society, they are necessarily parcelled into several congregations; for the capacity of such communion is the end of erecting particular churches; in all reason they should consist of persons, who by their cohabitation in a vicinity are made capable of it, and there may not be a greater local distance of the persons from each other than can stand with it.

Moreover all Christians of the same local precinct, not more populous nor of larger extent than to allow personal communion, are most conveniently brought into one and the same stated church, that there might be the greatest union among them, and that the occasion of straggling and running into several parties might be avoided. And so we find in Scripture that all the Christians within such a local precinct commonly made but one church.

Tho it be highly convenient that particular churches be so bounded, as to take in all the christians of the same precinct as aforesaid, and therefore necessary, when some special reason doth not compel to vary; yet it is not absolutely necessary in reason, nor do we find any divine institution to make it invariable, tho the Apostles and their coadjutors were led to this way by the natural convenience of it.

But if any where a greater inconvenience comes, or a greater benefit be lost by such a partition of Churches, than the convenience of it can countervail, there the partition must be made as it may be, that is, as the state of things will admit.

It is supposed by some learned men, that in the Apostles time there were several Churches at *Rome* under their several bishops or pastors, as one of the circumcision, another of the uncircumcision within the same local precincts. And if there were not so *de facto*, I think few will deny but that the state of christians then and there might have been such as to have made such a partition of churches among them lawful and expedient.

### § 18. *Of the power of a particular Church.*

**T**HE power of a Church is but the power of the ruling part thereof; and therefore the power of particular churches is according to the power of their particular bishops or pastors, the nature whereof shall be opened, when I come to speak of the nature of the pastoral office.

It appears by what hath been already shewed of the frame of particular churches mentioned in Scripture, that they all had the government within themselves. Every stated church had its proper pastor or pastors having authority of teaching and ruling it in Christs name.

If a distinction of churches into such as have Pastoral government within them, and such as have it not, be asserted, it must be proved by the assertors from divine testimony: And if it be granted that every organical church hath in it its authoritative Teacher or Guide under Christ, and in his name, it must be granted (as far as I can see) that it hath in it its Ruler also; for ruling is but by teaching and guiding.

The smallest Church hath the same power in its narrow Sphere that the greatest Church or any association of Churches have in their larger Spheres, that is, it hath the same power intensively, tho not extensively: Indeed, the authoritative acts of larger churches and associations in regard of their amplitude may be justly esteemed in degrees more Solemn, August and Venerable.

§ 19. *The subordination of Churches of the same kind, considered.*

**T**OUCHING this point of the subordination of Churches, there be three parts of the enquiry. 1. Whether there be a subordination of one or more particular Churches to another particular Church whose constitution and frame is the same *in specie* with theirs? 2. Whether there be a subordination of particular Churches to some other Church specifically different from them in the frame thereof, and being in a state of greater sublimity and amplitude? 3. Whether there be a subordination of particular Churches taken distributively, to an association or collective body of the same Churches, or an assembly thereof; and of that collective body to a larger association of more such collective bodies conjunct with it, or to an assembly thereof, and so forward till we come to the largest that can be reached unto?

1. Whether there be a subordination of one or more particular Churches to another particular Church, whose constitution and frame is the same *in specie* with theirs, and whose officers are of the same holy order, such as the seven Churches of *Asia* were in relation one to another, and as congregational Churches are to each other, and as Diocesan Churches are to each other, if *de jure* there be such Churches? Now as touching subordination in this kind, what hath been or may be by humane right upon prudential considerations either statedly or *pro tempore*, is not here examined; but what is by divine right inferring an obligation upon one Church to be subject to another of the same specifick frame with it self.

Sometimes a Church hath been called a mother-Church in relation to other churches, either because they have issued from it, as swarms from a hive, or because they have received the Christian faith from it, or because they have been erected by some sent forth from it, &c. Now that these latter Churches do owe a reverential regard and observance to the first, which is called the Mother-Church, is not to be doubted; and such regard or observance every small or obscure Church owes to those that are more Ample, illustrious or Renowned.

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But that the said Mother Church can by divine right or warrant claim a governing power over those Churches that have issued from it; or that the more Ample and Illustrious Churches can claim the like over the smaller and obscurer, I do not find any proof; but I judge the contrary, because, notwithstanding the aforesaid diversity or disparity of condition, they all rest upon the same Basis, Christs Charter, by which they are constituted, which is the same to all, and alike immediately given to all. So that in this respect they all stand upon the same level, and are equal. Now one equal hath not governing power over another in that wherein they are both equal.

§ 20. *The subordination of Churches of different kinds, considered.*

**A**S touching the subordination of Churches to some other Church specifically different from them, as of parochial or congregational Churches to a Diocesan, Provincial, National Church; be it first observed, that the Diocesan Church is not merely the incorporated society of a Cathedral, nor any one particular Church, besides the Parochial Churches; nor is it materially divers from them jointly taken; nor the provincial church from the Diocesan churches; nor the national church from the provincial churches jointly taken: But in their several ranks they differ formally, as being each of them one body politick constituted by the political compages of the churches included in each of them.

And let what was before observed be here reminded, that each congregational or parochial church, having its proper Presbyter or Elder invested with the power of the keys, is a political church, or such as hath its government within it self. And thereupon the divine warrant of such a Diocesan Church as is the lowest that hath government within it self, and consequently that swallows hundreds of political churches that are of Christs institution, was called in question, and still I desire the Asserters of it to give some proof of its divine right.

Indeed the Postscript of the Epistle to *Titus* mentions him as ordained the first bishop of the *Cretians*. Of what authority that Postscript is, I know not; but this is certain, that where there  
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were Christians, there were to be churches in every city of *Crae*, and these were reckoned a hundred cities in that no very large Island, and those churches were political societies within themselves having their proper elders or bishops. And upon supposition that the whole Island made but one larger church constituted by the political union of the said particular churches in every city under *Titus*, it must be such as is now called a provincial church under one Archbishop.

Now if the Diocesan church be not looked upon as the lowest political church, but as constituted by the political union of congregational or parochial churches, held also to be political, under an officer of another order, and the proper superior of those officers, under which the parochial churches immediately are, then let it be observed, that a church of this frame is not properly an Episcopal but an Archiepiscopal Church. For the churches whereof it is compacted are properly Episcopal, being such as have each of them their own bishop, pastor or elder. But the divine right of such an Archiepiscopal church, I leave to further inquiry.

As for a National church, I come now to inquire in what sense it may or may not be granted. In a more general notion it is some part of the universal church distinguished and severed from the rest of that body, by the limits of a Nation, or of a civil state; or in other terms, a nation of Christian churches, or the Christian churches of a Nation.

But there are more express and special notions thereof respecting the frame of Ecclesiastical Polity, which are discrepant from each other: And about the being thereof in these special notions, mens judgments vary. Some own a national church in this sense only: viz. a nation of churches, or the churches of a nation agreeing, at least in the essentials of christian Doctrine, divine Worship, and church Government. Some own a national church in a stricter sense, namely, the said churches not only agreeing in the points aforesaid, but politically united by the same common band of Ecclesiastical Government under one head personal or collective. And this stricter sense hath a subdivision; for it may be understood of the churches united in a Civil Ecclesiastical polity, under a civil head or supream, or of the churches embodied in the band of a polity purely Ecclesiastical under a spiritual head or supream.

I own the rightful being and divine warrant of a national church as united in one Civil Ecclesiastical polity under one civil head or supream, either personal as in a Monarchy, or collective as in a Republick. And in this sence I assent to the National Church of *England*: viz. All the churches in *England* politically united under one Supream Civil Church-Governour, the Kings Majesty.

Yet it is to be understood, that the partition of a church by the bounds of a nation or of a civil state, is but extrinsecal or accidental to the church as such; also that the union of the churches of a nation in the band of civil church-polity under a civil head, is but an extrinsecal, and not an intrinsecal union.

But I question the divine warrant of a national church embodied in the band of one national polity purely Ecclesiastical under one spiritual head or supream, either Personal as a Primate or Patriarch, or collective as a consistory of bishops or elders intrinsecally belonging to it, and being a constitutive part of it: For I find no Canon or Precedent for it in Scripture, which is the adequate rule of divine right in the frame of churches, and of what intrinsecally belongs thereunto, and I do not know any such spiritual head of the Church of *England*: as for the Arch-bishops of *Canterbury* and *York*, they at the most can be heads but of their respective provinces, and are not subordinate but coordinate to each other in point of Archiepiscopal Government, however the case is between them in point of precedence.

Yet if the civil supream power shall constitute a person or persons Ecclesiastical to be head of a national church, or the churches of a nation politically imbodyed, I here offer nothing against it, or for it: But if there be such a national constitution, being but humane, it is but extrinsecal and accidental to the church; and being derived from the civil supream, it is but a civil church-polity.



§ 21. *The subordination of particular Churches to an association or collective body of the same Churches, considered.*

**I** Come to enquire whether there be a subordination of churches, taken distributively to an association or collective body of the same Churches, or an assembly thereof; and again, whether there be a subordination of that collective body to a larger association of more collective bodies, or to an assembly thereof, and so forward till we come to the largest that can be reached unto.

The association of particular churches is of the law of nature, and therefore to be put in practise according to their capacity, tho there were no positive law for it; for they are all so many distinct members of one great body, or integral parts of the Catholick church; and they are all concerned in each others well being, both in reference to themselves as fellow members of one body, and to Christ their Head, whose honour and interest they must promote, each church not only within themselves, but throughout all the churches to the utmost extent of their agency: And they naturally stand in need of each others help in things that concern them severally and jointly.

Likewise that there be greater and lesser associations acting in their several spheres higher or lower, the one included in the other, is of the law of nature, or of natural convenience for the more ample capacity and more orderly contributing of the mutual help aforesaid; such as have been called classial, provincial and national assemblies used in one form of church-government; yea, and beyond this the association of the churches of many nations as far towards an oecumenical council, as they are capable of convening, is of the same reason: But of an oecumenical association truly so called, that is, of all the churches in the world, the moral impossibility thereof hath been spoken of before.

It is also by the law of nature most convenient that in the lesser associations all the ruling officers personally meet; and that in the larger they meet by their delegates or representatives chosen by all, and sent in the name of all, which meetings are called assemblies or synods; and the convenience of meeting by delegates is, that the particular churches be not for a time left wholly destitute of their guides, and that there may be less trouble and difficulty and danger of disorder in the whole management. Note, That what is most naturally convenient, hath in it the reason of necessary, or is matter of duty, unless when something gainsay or hinder, and then indeed it ceaseth to be convenient.

And that there be some kind of subordination in the said associations, and their respective Assemblies, is of the Law of nature, which requires order; but as to the kind or manner of subordination, men go several ways: Some place it in a proper Authority or Governing power that the collective bodies of Churches have over the several Churches included in them: others place it in the agreement of the several churches; and some of these make this further explanation, that the Canons made by Synods, as they are made for the people, who are subject to the Pastors, are a sort of Laws, and oblige by the Authority of the Pastors; but as they are made for the present or absent Pastors, who are separately of equal Office, Power, they are no Laws except in an equivocal sense, but only Agreements.

Now in judging between these two ways of the subordination enquired of, let it be considered, first, That every particular church hath power of government within it self, as hath been before observed. 2. That a particular church doth not derive that power from any other particular church, or collective body of churches, but hath it immediately from Christ. 3. That yet the acts of government in every particular church, have an influence into all the churches, being but integral parts of one whole, the Catholick church; and consequently they are all of them nearly concerned in one another, as members of the same body. 4. Thereupon that particular churches combine in such collective bodies and associations as have been before mentioned, is not arbitrary, but their duty. 5. That the greater collective bodies are in degrees more august and venerable than the lesser included in them; and in that regard ought to have sway with the lesser, and not meerly in regard of agreement: For tho in the greater there be but the  
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same power *in specie* with that in the lesser; yet it is more amply and illustriously exerted. 6. That in all Societies every part being ordered for the good of the whole, and the more ample and comprehensive parts coming nearer to the nature and reason of the whole, than the lesser and comprehended; the more ample parts if they have not a proper governing power over the lesser, have at least a preeminence over them for the ends sake; and this preeminence hath the force of a proper superior power in bearing sway. 7. Hence it follows, that the acts of Synods, if they be not directly acts of government over the particular Pastors, yet they have the efficacy of government, as being to be submitted to for the ends sake, The general good.

§ 22. *What is, and what is not of Divine Right in Ecclesiastical Polity.*

WE must distinguish between things that belong to the church as a church, or a Society divers in kind from all other Societies; and those things that belong to it extrinsically, & upon a reason common to it with other regular societies. The former wholly rest upon Divine Right; the latter are *in genere* requisite by the Law of Nature, which requires decency and order, and whatsoever is convenient in all societies; and so far they rest upon Divine Right; but *in specie* they are left to human determination, according to the general Rules given of God in Nature or Scripture. And it is to be noted, That such is the fulness of Scripture, that it contains all the general Rules of the Law of Nature.

Whatsoever in matter of Church-government doth go to the formal constitution of a church of Christ, is of Divine Right.

The frame of the Church catholick as one spiritual society under Christ the head (as before described) wholly rests upon Divine Right; and so the frame of particular churches as several spiritual Polities and integral parts of the Catholick church (as before described) is also of Divine Right, if such Right be sufficiently signified by the Precepts and Rules given by the Apostles for the framing of them, and by their practise therein. Moreover the parcelling of that one great Society the Church-catholick into

into particular Political Societies under their proper spiritual Guides and Rulers, is so necessary in nature to the good of the whole, that the Law of Nature hath made it unalterable.

It is intrinsick to all particular stated Churches, and so of Divine Right, that there be publick Assemblies thereof for the solemn Worship of God; that there be Bishops, Elders, or spiritual Pastors therein, and that these as Christs Officers guide the said Assemblies in publick Worship, that therein they authoritatively preach the Word, and in Christs Name offer the mercies of the Gospel upon his terms, and denounce the threatnings of the Gospel against those that despise the mercies thereof; that they dispense the Sacraments to the meet partakers, and the spiritual censures upon those that justly fall under them; that the members of these Societies explicately or implicately consent to their relation to their Pastors, and one towards another. It doth also intrinsically belong to particular churches, as they are integral parts of one Catholick church (of which all the particular Christians contained in them are members) and consequently it appears to be of Divine Right, that they hold communion one with another, and that they be imbodied according to their capacities in such Associations as have been before described.

As for all circumstantial variation, and accidental modification of the things aforesaid, with respect to meer decency, order, and convenience, according to time and occasion, being extrinsick to the spiritual frame and Polity of the Church as such, and belonging in common to it with all orderly Societies, they are of Divine Right only *in genere*, but *in specie* they are left to those to whom the conduct and government of the church is committed, to be determined according to the general Rules of Gods word.

Much of the controversie of this Age about several forms of Church-government, is about things extrinsick to the church-state, and but accidental modes thereof, tho the several parties in the controversie make those Forms to which they adhere to be of Divine Right, and necessary to a Church-state, or (as some speak) a Church-organical. Now in the said controverted Forms of Government there may be a great difference: for some may be congruous to the divine and constitutive frame of the Church, and advantageous to its ends; others may be incongruous to it, and destructive to its ends.

§ 23. *Of a True or False Church.*

**M**ANY notes of a true Church are contentiously brought in by those that would darken the truth by words without knowledge. But without more ado the true and real being of a Church stands in its conformity to that Law of Christ upon which his Church is founded. This Law is compleatly written in the Holy Scriptures.

The more of the aforesaid Conformity is found in any Church, the more true and sound it is; and the less of it is found in any church, the more corrupt and false it is, and the more it declines from truth and soundness.

A Church may bear so much conformity to its Rule, as is sufficient to the real being, or essential state of a Christian church, and yet withall bear such disconformity to its Rule, as renders it very enormous.

A church holding all the essentials of Faith, Worship, Ministry and Government, together with the addition of such Doctrine, Worship, Ministry and Government, as is by consequence a denial of those essentials, and a subverting of the foundation, is a true church as to the essentials, tho very enormous and dangerous. And they that are of the communion of such a church, who hold the essentials of Religion more prevalently in their judgment and practice, in their hearts and lives, than the superadded errors and corruptions; and are ready to Renounce those errors and corruptions, if they saw their inconsistency with the essentials, are true Christians, otherwise they are not such.

The same church may be a true and a false church in different respects, or formal considerations: In respect of the essentials of Christian Faith, Worship and Ministry, it may be a true church; and in respect of some devised Church-form superadded, by which over and above the said Essentials it is constituted and denominated, it may be in that distinct formal consideration a false church.

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# O F T H E M I N I S T R Y .

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## § I. *The Nature of the holy Ministry in general.*

**T**HE Holy Ministry is a state of Authority and Obligation to perform some special Holy Works and Services in the Name of Christ for the edifying of the church: So that whosoever is in a holy order or office, is *qua talis* authorized and obliged to the work and service that is appropriated to it; and whosoever stately and *de jure* doth the work and service appropriated to a holy order, is really in or of that order, altho men may not give him the name thereof.

Whether the Magiftratical and Ministerial Offices may reside together in the same person, is not here considered; but if it were granted that they may, they would essentially differ from each other: For the Magistrate as such hath received no authority formally ministerial; nor hath any minister as such the power of a civil magistrate.

Some thus distinguish between the magiftratical and ministerial authority, that the one is directive, and the other imperative. I take not this to be a competent distinction; for that authority that infers an obligation on the subject to obey, is properly imperative, and the ministerial authority doth so; as the Scripture speaks expressly, *Heb. 13. 17. Paul* was no Magistrate, but as a Minister he speaks, *2 Cor. 10. 6.* Having in readiness to revenge all disobedience; and he expressly declares his ministerial authority



ty to be imperative, *Phil. v. 8. Tho I might make bold in Christ to injoy thee that which is convenient, &c. and v. 21. having confidence in thine obedience, I wrote unto thee.* Now they had rightly distinguished, if instead of imperative they had put coercive, coactive or imperial; For all directive authority by special office is imperative. Whosoever doth by special office direct unto duty in the name of his King, and according to his will ( as a Minister doth in the name of Christ ) doth therein command. But a coactive power is something more and belongs not to a Minister as such. The Magistrate rules by the Sword, and the Minister by the Word.

## § 2. *Of the efficient cause of the Ministry and its Authority.*

**A**S Christ alone hath the power of appointing the work or works of the holy ministry to be done in his name either towards believers, or the unbelieving; towards the church jointly, or toward particular persons severally; so he alone hath the power of appointing the holy orders or offices that contain an authority and obligation to perform the same: And seeing Christ hath already appointed all the ministerial works, and appropriated the same to certain ministerial orders, no new order or office of the holy ministry can be instituted by men, for they cannot institute other ministerial work to be done in Christs Name, than what he hath appointed.

But the circumstances and accidental modes, and subservient offices about the work of the ministry are of that nature, as that they well may be appointed by men; and accordingly the officers for the management thereof may be so appointed: and such modes and circumstances being necessarily subject to great variation in regard of the great diversity of occasion, cannot well be pre-defined.

The holy ministry and power belonging to it, is conferred neither by Magistrate, nor by Prelate, nor by any spiritual officer or officers as the proper givers thereof, but by Christ alone: And tho Christ give it in some respect by the mediation of men, yet not by them as giving the office power, but as instruments either of

designing the person to whom he gives it, or of the solemn investiture of that person therein ; as the King is the immediate giver of the power of a Mayor in a Town corporate, when he gives it by the mediation of the Electors, not as giving the power, but designing the person to be invested with it, or by the mediation of some other officers as instruments of the solemn investiture.

Neither Magistrate nor Prelate, nor any spiritual officer or officers can disannul or take away that spiritual office, whereof they are not the authors, nor in proper sense the givers. Nor can they enlarge or lessen it as to its essential state, or define it otherwise than Christ hath defined it : And if the ordainer in conveying the holy office or order should use any any words or actions that import the lessening thereof in its essential state, they are void and null ; as if a Minister that joyns a Man and Woman in marriage according to the true intent of that ordinance, shall add some words that forbid the Husband the government of his Wife, that addition is a nullity.

### § 3. *Of the Office of a Bishop, Elder, or Pastor.*

**T**HE Ministry of Gods appointment is either extraordinary and temporary, as that of the Apostles, and Prophets, and Evangelists also, if so be they were only the itinerary assistants of the Apostles ; or ordinary and perpetual, as that of Pastors and Teachers.

The words Elder, Bishop, Pastor, are names of the same Sacred Office, as appears *Acts* 20. 17, 28. where their Ministry towards the Church is set forth in *Pauls* words to the Elders which he sent for from *Ephesus* to *Miletum* ; *Take heed to your selves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

The Apostles besides their extraordinary Office of Apostleship, had also the ordinary Office of Bishops, Pastors and Elders ; or (to speak peradventure more properly ) they had these ordinary offices included in their Apostleship. Christ saith to *Peter*, *Feed my sheep.* And *Peter* calls himself an Elder, *1 Pet.* 5. 1. And *John* in his

his second and third Epistles so calls himself. And indeed if it were not so, they could have no successors or partakers. Howbeit the Scripture gives us no evidence of their being fixed Bishops or Pastors to particular Churches.

As for the meaning of these names, the word Bishop imports an Overseer ; Elder is a name of Authority borrowed from age, and applied to a Ruling-officer. The word Pastor is metaphorical, signifying that this Officer is to the Congregation of God as a Shepherd to a Flock of sheep, to feed them.

This feeding consists in teaching and ruling ; so that every Pastor is in the nature of his office a Teacher, and he feeds by doctrine. And indeed Pastoral Ruling is by teaching ; so that every authoritative Church-teacher is a Pastor ; for the Pastor rules only by the spiritual sword, which is the word of God ; and the discipline which he exercises, is no more than the personal application of Christs word in his name, to judge the impenitent, and absolve the penitent. And every authoritative Teacher in Christs name hath power to make such personal application of the word.

The Pastoral Office hath its work not only towards those that are within, but towards those also that are without, to bring them into the Fold. As Christ the Prince of Pastors, or chief Shepherd, doth by virtue of that office not only feed the sheep that are gathered to him, but goes out also into the wilderness to seek the lost sheep ; even so the Ministerial pastors or bishops are by virtue of their office under Christ, to seek those that are as yet going astray, and to bring them to Christ the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. Thus the name *Pastor* doth very congruously denote the Ministerial Authority towards the unbelieving and unconverted, as well as towards believers and converts.

Moreover the said Officers are stiled Preachers of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 14. Stewards of the Mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4. 1. Ambassadors of Christ, that have the Ministry of Reconciliation committed to them, 2 Cor. 5. 18, 20. And these Titles infer an Office and Ministry relating as well to those that are without, and to be brought into the Fold, as to those that are within, and to be kept there ; and in reference to both sorts it is for the edifying or building of the Church.

In short, the Pastoral Office is a state of Authority and obligation to dispence the Word and Sacraments, and disciplinary censures

fures of Christ the Mediator in his name.

The Ministerial dispensation of the Word, differs *quoad formam*, from spiritual instruction, reproof, exhortation, given in a common way of Christian charity, or in a special way of Oeconomical or civil Authority, being performed by Christs commissioned Officers and Stewards in holy things, and separated or devoted thereunto. And herein the Ministers as Ambassadors or Heralds, according to the tenor of the Gospel, do publish and offer the mercies of Christ upon his terms, and denounce the threatnings of Christ to those that refuse his Mercies.

The Sacraments being seals annexed by Christ to the word of his grace, and a visible word, are also to be dispensed by them to whom the dispensation of the word is committed.

The disciplinary censures of Authoritative Reproof, Suspension and Excommunication of persons convicted of ungodliness and impenitency, being a particular and personal application of the threatnings of the Gospel, and a declaring and judging of the persons unmeet for fellowship with Christ and his Church, are likewise to be administered by the same Officers.

#### § 4. *The nature of the Spiritual Power residing in the Pastors.*

THE Spiritual Power of Pastors, Bishops, or Elders, is expressed by the Author and Giver of it, in these terms, *viz.* *The keys of the kingdom of heaven, binding and loosing, remitting and retaining sins.* To understand the true import of these terms, is to understand the Power enquired of. The keys of the kingdom of Heaven, signifie the Stewardship of Christs Gospel, to dispence to every one a due portion thereof, according to his command. Binding and loosing, is a Ministerial Authority of holding impenitent sinners under the curse, and absolving the penitent from it, only by the word of Christ generally or personally applied; and it may further signifie a Ministerial prohibiting of that which is unlawful, and allowing of that which is lawful, by the doctrine of Christ. And the power of remitting and retaining sins as granted to Ministers, is only that of meet Stewards or Dispensers of the Blessing or the Curse that hath proceeded out of the mouth of Christ

Christ their Lord; and there appears no grant from Christ to his Ministers of other power than what is here expressed, or what is implied in it, or by necessary consequence follows from it.

In reference to the ministerial power, a great Scholar distinguisheth between a Vicar and a mere Minister, and saith, a Vicar doth produce actions of the same kind with him whose Vicar he is ( his words are *actiones congeneres* ) tho less perfectly; but a mere minister doth not produce such actions; but only such as are serviceable to the action of the principal cause. Therefore the name of the same action is properly, yet analogically attributed to the Vicar as to the principal; as for example, to pass sentence: but to the minister only tropically, as remitting and retaining of sins.

Indeed the sentence of a vicarious Judg, whether just or unjust, is decisive or definitive, and valid as to matter of legal right, till it be reversed by the principal; but the action of a Minister for the remitting and retaining of sin, is of no force, no not for a moment, if it be unjust, or done ( as the common expression is ) *errante clau-*

*re*. Hereupon it follows, that the ministerial power of remitting and retaining sins, and of binding and loosing ( at least as to the conscience ) is merely declarative, that is, it hath its force and vertue, as it is a true declaration of the mind of Christ in that particular, otherwise it is void and of no effect.

The power of Pastors in the acts aforesaid is but the power of Heralds, or Ambassadors, and therefore only declarative.

God and Christ doth by the law of grace absolve or justify the penitent, *constitutivè*: Even before the Pastor pronounceth absolution, every penitent is by the covenant of grace justified or made righteous: Therefore the Pastor doth absolve or justify him only *declarativè*: For when a man is justified by the law of grace, and consequently so esteemed and judged of God, what hath his officer or minister afterwards to do in his name, but to declare what is already done in law.

As for the saying of *Dominus expectat servum*, that is, before God justifies the penitent believer who is ready to submit to all his terms, he stays for the sentence of absolution to be pronounced by the Minister; I confess I understand not its consistence with the Covenant of Grace.

Where-

Wherefore the pastoral sentence of absolution doth confer no new right, nor doth it perfect the right already given by the law of Christ; but it doth authoritatively declare that right, and strengthen the assurance, and comfort the conscience of the penitent. The pastoral binding of the impenitent is not the adding of a further curse or obligation to divine vengeance, but merely a solemn declaration of the curse already past upon the sinner by the law of Christ.

But as the solemn declaration of the Kings pardon to repenting rebels, and the denunciation of vengeance to the obstinate by an authorized officer according to the law, doth strengthen the assurance of the conditional mercy, and increase the guilt of continuing in rebellion, and more forcibly press to obedience; so the like declarative acts of Christs Ministers have the same force towards his subjects.

That the power of a Pastor in binding and loosing as to the communion and external privileges of the Church, is more than declarative of the mind of Christ therein, I yet discern not: For tho the sentence of an erring judg in a Civil judicatory is valid till it be reversed; yet the erring keys have no effect, and the Church and the Members thereof are not bound by the unjust sentence of a Pastor to reject a godly person, that hath not given just scandal, or to carry themselves towards him as towards one unfit for Christian Communion; but they are still to receive him as a brother: Indeed the injured person may be bound to forbear the use of his right in some parts thereof, as coming to the Church-Assembly in case a schism or disturbance would follow: But this obligation doth not arise from any validity that is in the unjust sentence, but from the duty of preserving peace and order.

The distinction of the power of Order, and the power of jurisdiction, is vain. For the spiritual Pastor or Elder hath no other power than the power of the Keys, and the full power of the Keys intrinsically belongs to the order or office of a Pastor or Elder. But if any pretend that the full power of the Keys doth not intrinsically belong to the office of a Pastor or Elder, but a part only, or that there be two kinds of power of the Keys, the one whereof belongs only to one superior kind of spiritual officers, and the other is common to all spiritual Pastors, let him prove such distinction and distribution from the Word of God.



## § 5. *Of the Delegation of Spiritual Power.*

**T**HE delegation of power is a derivation thereof from its ordinary subject, to another who is not the ordinary subject thereof, and who hath right to exercise it merely as authorized by the ordinary subject thereof; as when a Bishop delegates his episcopal power to him, who is no Bishop, and who exercises the same merely by virtue of his delegation.

The office of a Bishop, Pastor or Elder, is a trust, and that of the greatest consequence in the world, and a trust may not be delegated by the receiver to another person without the express consent of the giver. No subordinate officer can make a legal deputy unless he be authorized thereunto by law, or in his commission or Charter from the supream power: And Christ hath not express his consent to the transferring of this trust, nor given authority to his Ministers to make such Delegation.

That Princes and Sovereign Powers being Gods Trustees, do transfer the work of their trust to Delegates and subordinate officers, is no ground for Christs Ministers to do the like: For first, Christs Ministers are only authorized Ambassadors, Heralds, and not Spiritual Sovereigns under him, as the supream Magistrates are Civil Sovereigns under God. 2. It is in the nature of civil sovereignty to make delegates and subordinate officers of civil power, and the due Government of the Civil State makes it necessary; but there is no such thing in the nature of the pastoral office, and no necessity for it in Ecclesiastical Government. 3. The specification of magistracy or civil power is left to men, but the spiritual power is specified by Christ, and by him appropriated to officers of his own institution. 4. Christ to provide for his flock hath taken another course than to authorize Bishops and Pastors to do their work by Delegates, namely, to command the ordaining of more Bishops or Elders as need requires.

The delegation of Episcopal Power is a repugnancy in it self. For it is the power of the keys, or of stewardship in Christs house, of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins in Christs name, by special authority from him. And can any that is not Christs officer so authorized, exert such power?

Besides, if one part of the bishops proper work, *viz.* The exercise of Ecclesiastical Government, may be delegated to one that is no bishop, why may not any other part of his work be so delegated, as the ordaining of ministers? And if it be replied, *ad ordinem pertinet ordinare*, by as good reason it may be said, that it as incommunicably belongs to the order or office of Christs institution to exercise Christs Discipline, as to ordain Ministers.

Indeed a Vicar being of the same sacred office or order, may so exert the said power in the place of another, as that his act is valid. But it may well be questioned, whether any bishop may make one or more vicarious bishops to execute his charge, for every bishop hath received a trust from Christ to be fulfilled in his own person, *Col. 1. 7.* And I do not find that Christ hath granted a faculty to any bishop to fulfil his Ministry by a Vicar of his own order.

But I do not question, but a bishop may have an assistant or assistants of his own order, either occasionally in case of present disability or justifiable avocation; or statedly when the flock that is under his personal oversight requires more work than one man can do. And then the said assistants are not his Vicars, but colleagues, performing each of them their own part in the work and service of their Lord Christ.

### § 6. *The identity of a Bishop and Presbyter.*

**I**T is granted by the assertors of prelacy, that the names Bishop and Presbyter are used promiscuously: Now they that assert two distinct offices under promiscuous names, had need bring clear proof for the distinction of those offices: Howbeit I do not merely insist on the names as indifferently used; but wheresoever the sacred office of Presbyterate is set forth in Scripture, it is set forth as the office of a spiritual Pastor or Bishop, which is to feed the Flock of God by teaching and ruling it; And such a Presbyter as is a sacred officer of the Christian Church, but not a Bishop or Pastor, is not to be found in Scripture.

*Tit. 1. 5, 7.* shews not only an identity of name, but of office. To give order for the admission of none to the office of an Elder but one so qualified, because a Bishop must be so qualified, is not rational,

tional, if the bishop be of a distinct office from the Presbyter, and superior to him.

*Act. 20. 28* The Elders are called Bishops, and have the whole Episcopal Power to feed the flock by government as well as by doctrine.

*1 Pet. 5. 12.* The elders are exhorted to feed the Flock of God which is among them, and to take the oversight thereof; and under the force of these two words *ἐπιμενέτω* & *ποιέτω* the bishops claim their whole power of government.

*1 Tim. 3.* The Apostle immediately passeth from the Bishop to the Deacon, and takes no notice of such an officer as a Presbyter below a Bishop, and above a Deacon: And neither this nor any other Scripture doth afford us the least notice of any qualification or ordination, or any sacred work and duty belonging to a Presbyter, who is no bishop. Not one place of Scripture doth set forth any Presbyter as less than a bishop.

*Phil. 1. 1.* Paul makes mention of Bishops and Deacons in the Church at *Philippi* in the inscription of his Epistle, but no mention of Presbyters that were not bishops. And it seems by that Text that in the Apostles times there were more bishops than one placed in one city; and 'tis to be noted, that *Philippi* was but a little City under the Metropolis of *Thessalonica*.

Thus bishop and elder in the places aforesaid, are names of the same office, whatsoever it be; and the Hierarchical Divines grant as much, but are not agreed what office is there set forth by those names. One part of them think that those Texts speak of, or at least comprehend such Presbyters as are now so called: The other part of them think they speak of such bishops as are now distinct from presbyters: Now they that hold that the said Texts speak of or include such presbyters as are now so called, must needs hold that such presbyters are pastors and bishops in the Scripture sense of those names, and so an identity of the bishop and presbyter is confessed, and it rests upon them to prove the divine institution of bishops of a higher order over such presbyters; and they that hold that the said Texts speak of such bishops as are now distinct from presbyters, must needs grant, the qualification, ordination, and work of presbyters inferior to bishops is not set forth in Scripture.

If it be said that the order of inferior and subject presbyters is of divine institution, and yet not defined or expressed in Scripture, let a satisfactory proof be brought from some other authority of its divine institution, and what its nature is.

If it be said that at first the function of a bishop and presbyter was one, but afterwards it was divided into two, and that the division was made by divine warrant, the asserters are bound to prove it by sufficient authority.

To have the power of the keys, of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins in Christs name, as his commissioned Officer, is to have Episcopal power, and this power belongs to a Presbyter. The Asserters of Prelacy answer this, by distinguishing the power of the keys in *foro interiore*, or the Court of Conscience within; and *foro exteriore*, in the exterior Court, to wit, that of the Church; and say that the former belongs to the Bishop and Presbyter both, and the latter to the Bishop only. To which I reply, 1. The Scripture makes no such distinction; and where the Law distinguisheth not, we may not distinguish. 2. The distinction is vain: for all power that belongs to the Pastors of the Church purely, respects the conscience, by applying to it the commands, promises, and threatenings of God; and it respects the conscience, as having the conduct of the outward man, and that in reference to Church-communion, as well as other matters. 3. If Presbyters may in the name of Christ bind the impenitent, and loose the penitent as to the conscience in the sight of God, which is the greater and primary binding and loosing; then by parity of reason, and that with advantage, they may bind and loose as to Church-communion, which is the lesser, secondary and subsequent binding and loosing.

That Officer is a Bishop that hath power of authoritative declaring in Christs name, that this or that wicked person in particular is unworthy of fellowship with Christ and his Church, and a power of charging the Congregation in Christs name not to keep company with him, as being no fit member of a Christian Society; and also a power of Authoritative declaring and judging in Christs name, that the same person repenting of his wickedness, and giving evidence thereof, is meet for fellowship with Christ and his church, and a power of requiring the Congregation in Christs name again to receive him into their Christian fellowship. For these are the powers of Excommunication, and Ecclesiastical Absolution; and a Presby-

Presbyter hath apparently the said powers. As he can undoubtedly declare, and charge, and judg, as aforesaid, touching persons in general; so by parity of reason, touching this or that person in particular; all particulars being included in the general. He hath undoubtedly a power of applying the word in Christs name, as well personally as generally. That a Presbyter hath the said powers, is granted by the Church of *England* in the common usage of the Ecclesiastical Courts, wherein a Presbyter is appointed to denounce the sentence of Excommunication, tho the Chancellor doth decree it. And the Excommunication is not compleat, till a Presbyter hath denounced it in the congregation.

That the Apostles have no successors in the whole of their Office, is confessed on all hands; but if they have successors in part of their Office, viz. in the Pastoral Authority, in this respect the Presbyters, if any, are their successors. Peter exhorting the Presbyters, styles himself their fellow-Presbyter, which is to be understood in respect of the power of Teaching and Ruling.

The Pastoral Authority of Presbyters is further cleared in many passages in the publick forms of the Church of *England* touching that Order.

The form of Ordaining Presbyters in this Church, lately was, *Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins thou remittest, they are remitted; and whose sins thou retainest, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy Sacraments, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.* Now the former part hereof is intirely the words used by our Saviour, *John 20. 21, 22.* towards the Apostles, expressing their Pastoral Authority. And the latter part is no derogation or diminution from the power granted in the former part. If Presbyters are not partakers with the Apostles in the Pastoral Authority, how could they have Right to that Form of Ordination?

Likewise this Church did in solemn form of words require the presbyters when they were ordained, to exercise the discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded, and this Realm hath received the same, according to the commandment of God. And that they might the better understand what the Lord hath commanded therein, this Church did appoint also, That at the ordering of Priests there be read for the Epistle that portion of *Acts 20.* which relates St. Paul's sending to *Ephesus*, and calling for the Elders of the Congregation, with his exhortation to them, *To take heed to them-*

themselves, and to all the flock, whereof the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to rule the congregation of God. Or else 1 Tim. 3. which sets forth the Office and due Qualifications of a Bishop. These portions of Scripture this Church appointed to be read to the Presbyters, as belonging to their Office, and to instruct them in the nature of it. And afterwards the Bishop speaks to them that are to receive the Office of Priesthood, in this form of words : You have heard, brethren, as well in your private examination, as in the exhortation and holy lessons taken out of the Gospel, and the writings of the Apostles, of what dignity, and how great importance this Office is whereto ye are called ; that is to say, The Messengers, the Watchmen, the pastors and stewards of the Lord, to teach, to preach, to feed, to provide for the Lords Family.

I acknowledge the passages here alledged are taken out of the old Book of Ordination that was established in this Church till the late alteration made Anno 1662. If those Alterations signifie another meaning about the several Holy Orders, than what was signified in the Old Book, then the sense of the Church of England in these times, differs from the sense of the same Church in all times preceding the said Alterations. But if they signifie no other meaning than what was signified in the old Book, my Citations are of force to shew what is the sense of this Church, as well of the present as of the former times about this matter.

And let this be further considered, That the form of ordaining a Bishop according to the Church of England, imports not the conferring of a higher power, or an authorizing to any special work, more than to what the Presbyter is authorized. The old form was, *Take the Holy Ghost ; and remember that thou stir up the grace of God that is in thee, by imposition of hands : for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of soberness.* What is there in this form of words, that might not be used to a Presbyter at his ordination ? Or what is there in it expressive of more power than what belongs to a Presbyter ? The new form since the late alteration, is, *Receive the Holy Ghost for the work and office of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed to thee by imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. And remember that thou stir up the grace of God that is given thee by this imposition of our hands, for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of soberness.* And what is there in this form that is expressive



pressive of any office power that the Presbyter hath not, unless these words, *for the work and office of a bishop*? Now both the name, and work, and office of a bishop, belongs to the Scripture-presbyter, who is of divine institution; and the presbyter to whom it doth not belong, is but a humane creature, or an ordinance of man.

### § 7. *Of the present Diocesan Bishop.*

**A** Diocesan Bishop according to the hierarchical state, is a Bishop of the lowest degree, having under him Parish-Ministers that are Presbyters or Priests, but not accounted Bishops, and by divine right claiming to himself alone the Episcopal Authority over all the Parish Churches and Ministers within his Diocese, which may contain a hundred, two hundred, five hundred, or a thousand parishes: For an Episcopacy of this kind I discern no Scripture-Warrant nor Divine Right.

Every particular Church should have its proper pastor or Bishop, and particular Churches with their proper pastors are so evidently of divine right, that some eminently learned men in the Church of *England* have declared their judgment that no form of Church-Government besides the mere pastoral office and Church-Assemblies, is prescribed in the Word of God, but may be various according to the various condition and occasion of several Churches.

But if it be said that parochial Congregations are not Churches but only parts of the Diocese, which is the lowest political Church, I desire proof from Scripture, that such Congregations as our parishes having their proper presbyter or presbyters invested with the power of the keys, are not Churches properly so called. The reason of demanding this proof is, because the Scripture is a perfect rule for the essential constitution of Churches, though the accidents thereto belonging may be regulated by humane prudence. And it is most evident in Scripture, that a particular congregation of Christians having their proper pastor or pastors, presbyter or presbyters, are Churches properly so called, and a parochial Minister I conceive to be a pastor, presbyter, or elder, according to the Scripture.

Moreover if a Diocels containing many hundred, or perhaps a thousand parishes ( as it doth in *England* ) do constitute but one particular Church, and the parishes be not properly to be accounted Churches, but only so many parts of that one diocesan Church, why may not ten thousand, yea, ten times ten thousand parishes be likewise accounted but one particular church, and brought under one man as the sole bishop or pastor thereof?

Nor do I discern how it is possible for one man to do the work of a bishop towards so many parishes, which is to oversee all the flock, to preach to them all, to baptize and confirm all that are to be baptized and confirmed, to administer the Lords Supper to all, to bless the congregation, publickly and privately to admonish all as their need requires, to excommunicate the impenitent, to absolve the penitent, and that upon knowledge of their particular estate: for all these are pastoral or episcopal acts. And let it here be noted, that I speak of the work of a bishop *in fini gradus*, or under whom there are no subordinate bishops.

If such a Diocesan bishop saith, it sufficeth that he perform all this to the flock by others, namely, by the parish ministers as his Curates, and by other officers his substitutes: It is answered, 1. The pastoral Authority is a personal trust. 2. He is to shew his commission from Christ the prince of pastors, to do his work by others; for I am now enquiring what is of divine, and not of humane Right. 3. None but a bishop can do the proper work of a bishop; and consequently, the presbyters by whom the Diocesan doth his work, either are bishops, or their act is an usurpation and a nullity.

It is matter of divine Right only that is here considered. As for the humane Rights of a Diocesan bishop, to wit, his dignity, and his jurisdiction under the King as Supreme, and to which he is intituled by the Law of the Land, I intermeddle not therewith.

### § 8. Of a Bishop or Bishops.

THE Divine Right of a bishop *in fini gradus*, Ruling over many churches as their sole bishop or pastor, hath been considered; and now it is to be considered, Whether there be of divine

vine institution, such a spiritual officer as hath the oversight of Bishops, or is a Bishop of Bishops. The Diocesan Bishop is really of this kind, tho he will not own it; for he is a bishop of Presbyters, who are really bishops, if they be that kind of Presbyters that the Scripture mentions. But if the Presbyters, which in the hierarchical state are subject to the Diocesan Bishop, be of another kind, they are not of Christs institution.

What hath been already said against the Episcopacy of a bishop *in fimi gradus* over many Churches, makes not against the right of an overseer of other bishops, such as *Titus* must needs be, if he were indeed bishop of *Crete*, which contained a hundred Cities, and where bishops or elders were ordained in every City: If either Scripture or Prudence guided by Scripture, be for such an office, I oppose it not.

Now a bishop of bishops may be taken in a twofold notion, either for one of a higher order; that is to say, of an office specifically different from the subordinate bishops, or for one of a higher degree only in the same order. I suppose our Archbishops of Provinces do not own the former notion of a bishop of bishops, but the latter only. But the bishop of a Diocese is *de facto* that which the Archbishop of a Province doth not own, namely, a bishop of bishops in a different order from the Presbyters of his Diocese, who have been already proved from Scripture to be bishops.

Hereupon the present inquiry is, Whether the Word of God doth warrant the office of a bishop of bishops in either of the said notions. And in this inquiry I shall consider what kind of Government the Apostles had over the Pastors or Elders of particular Churches 2. The Episcopacy of *Timothy* and *Titus* much alledged by the Hierarchical Divines. 3. The preeminence of the Angels of the seven Churches of *Asia*, *Apoc.* 1. and 2.

§ 9. *The BISHOPS Plan of being the  
Apostles Successors in their Governing-  
Power, examined.*

**T**H O the Apostles in respect of that in them, which was common to other officers, call themselves Presbyters and Ministers, but never bishops; yet it is asserted by the asserters of Prelacy, that bishops superior to Presbyters are the Apostles successors, and thereupon have a governing-power over Presbyters. Wherefore the Apostles governing-power, and the said bishops right of succession thereunto, is necessarily to be considered.

As touching this claimed succession in the governing power, the defenders of prelacy say, that Presbyters, *qua* Presbyters, succeed the Apostles in the office of governing. But the Scripture doth not warrant this dividing of the office of teaching and governing. And if the division cannot be proved, in case there be a succession, it must be into the whole, and not into a part; and so the Presbyters must succeed as well in ruling as in teaching: Besides it hath been already proved, that an authoritative Teacher of the Church is *qua talis* a Ruler.

The Apostles had no successors in their special office of Apostleship. For not only the unction or qualification of an Apostle, but also the intire Apostolick office as in its formal state or specific difference, was extraordinary, and expired with their persons. It was an office by immediate Vocation from Christ without the intervention of man by election or ordination, for the authentic promulgation of the Christian Doctrine, and the erecting of the Christian Church throughout the World, which is built on the foundation of their Doctrine, and for the governing of all churches wherever they came; and it eminently contained all the power of ordinary bishops and pastors. The continuation of teaching and governing in the Church, doth no more prove that the office of teaching and governing in the Apostles was *quoad formale*, an ordinary office, than that the office of teaching and governing in Christ himself was so: But their teaching and

and governing was by immediate call, and authentick and uncontrollable, and therefore extraordinary. And I do not know that the bishops say they are Apostles, tho they say they are the successors of the Apostles.

Moreover in proper speaking, the ordinary bishops or elders cannot be reckoned the successors of the Apostles, for they were not succedaneous to them, but contemporary with them from the first planting of churches, and did by divine right receive and exercise their governing-power. And the bishops or elders of all succeeding ages are properly the successors of those first bishops or elders, and can rightfully claim no more power than they had.

Nevertheless let the Apostles governing power be inquired into, as also what interest the bishops of the Hierarchical state have therein. And in this query it is to be considered; That the Presbyters, whom the Apostles ordained and governed, were bishops both in name and thing, and consequently their example of ordaining and ruling such Presbyters, is not rightly alledged to prove that bishops as their successors have an appropriated power of ordaining and ruling Presbyters of an inferior order, which in Scripture times were not in being. Further it is to be considered; Whether the said governing-power were only a supereminent authority which they had as Apostles, and infallible, and to whom the last appeals in matters of religion were to be made; or an ordinary governing power over the Churches, and the bishops or elders thereof. I conceive it most rational to take it in the former sense: For we find that the ordinary stated government of particular Churches was in the particular Bishops or Elders, and we find not that any of the Apostles did take away the same from them, or that it was superseded by their presence, or that they reserved to themselves a negative voice in the government of the Churches.

Now if their governing power were only the said supereminent Apostolick authority, they had no successors therein; and tho teaching and ruling be of standing necessity, and consequently of perpetual duration in the Church, yet there is no standing necessity of that teaching and ruling as taken formally in that extraordinary state and manner as before expressed.

But if they exercised an ordinary governing-power over the Churches and bishops to be continued by succession, such kind of Bishops, over whom that power was exercised, cannot claim a

right of succession into the same; but they must be officers of an higher *orb*. Consequently if the Hierarchical Bishops claim the right of succession to the Apostles in their governing-power, they must needs be of a higher *orb* than the first Bishops of particular Churches over whom that power was exercised: And if this Hypothesis of the Apostles having an ordinary governing-power over the Churches and Bishops, do sufficiently prove the right of the succession of Bishops of a higher *orb* in the same power, I shall not oppose it; But only I take notice, that these higher Bishops are not of the same kind with those first bishops that were under that governing power, and of which we read in Scripture.

That the Apostles should be Diocesan Bishops was not consistent with their Apostolick office, being a general charge extending to the Church universal. That any Apostle did appropriate a Diocesis to himself, and challenge the sole Episcopal authority therein, cannot be proved. The several Apostles for the better carrying on of the work of their office, did make choice of several regions, more especially to exercise their function in. There was an agreement that *Peter* should go to the Circumcision, and *Paul*, to the Uncircumcision: But as it doth not hence follow that *Peter* was a fixed Bishop of the *Jews*, and *Paul* of the *Gentiles*, no more were any of the Apostles fixed Bishops in those places where they were more especially employed, and we know that they made frequent removes.

### §. 10. Of the Episcopacy of Timothy and Titus.

THE Name of Bishop is not given either to *Timothy* or *Titus*, except in the Postscripts of the Epistles. But those Postscripts are taken for no part of Canonical Scripture. For if they were free from the objected Errors about the places from which the Epistles were written, they cannot in reason be supposed to be *Paul's* own words, and written by him when the Epistles were written.

Moreover the travels of *Timothy* and *Titus* do evidently shew, that they were not diocesan bishops, nor the settled Overseers of particular churches.



And those passages 1 *Tim.* 1. 3. *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus*; and Tit. 1. 5. *For this cause I left thee in Crete*, shew an occasional and temporary employment. And whatsoever stress may be laid upon these texts to prove they were bishops of those places, yet they do not sound like the fixing of them each in their proper dioceses.

The name of an Evangelist is expressly given to one of them, 2 *Tim.* 4. 5. and the work enjoined both of them, and accordingly performed by them, being throughout of the same kind, there is all reason to believe that they had the same kind of office.

Now by several texts of Scripture compared together, we find the work of Evangelists to be partly such as belonged to the Apostles, whose Agents or Adjuncts they were; and partly such as was common to Pastors and Teachers, whose office was included in theirs. Their work in common with the Apostles, was the planting and settling of churches, by travelling from place to place; and in this regard they have been well called Apostles of the Apostles. And in doing this Vice-apostolick service, they did also that which was common to pastors and teachers, in teaching and ruling, but with this difference, that the ordinary pastors did it stably in those churches where they were fixed; but these transiently in several churches, which they were sent to erect or establish, or to set things in order therein, as the Apostles saw need.

Or if *Timothy* and *Titus* were not in an office essentially divers from the ordinary pastors and teachers; yet they were in extraordinary service, as being the Apostles Agents, and being in that capacity, might have their intrinick spiritual power enlarged to a greater extent, and higher pitch of exercise than the ordinary Ministers. Howbeit I rather judg that they had an office specifically different from that of the ordinary pastors, because in the enumeration of the several sacred offices, *Paul* mentions the office of an Evangelist as a distinct kind from the rest.

But if it can be proved that the Superiority of *Timothy* and *Titus* over bishops or elders of particular churches, was not as they were the Apostles assistants, or as extraordinary and temporary officers, but as ordinary superiors, it will indeed follow that Arch-bishops, or bishops of bishops, are of divine Right. Nevertheless the Episcopal authority of bishops or presbyters of particular churches (such as the Scripture-bishops were) remains unshaken.

## § II. Of the Angels of the Churches.

**A**Nother allegation for the divine right of bishops of an higher order than presbyters, is from the Angels of the seven Churches, *Apoc.* 1. and 2. To which many things are said by those of the other persuasion; As, that those Angels are not called Bishops, nor any where implied to be bishops in the present Vulgar sense of the word: That the denomination of Angels and Stars in the judgment of ancient and modern Writers, do belong to the Ministers of the Word in general: That in mysterious or prophetick Writings, and Visional Representations, a number of things or persons is usually expressed by singulars; and that it is very probable, that the term *Angel* is explained under that plurality *you*, distinguished from *the rest*, *Apoc.* 2. 24. but *to you and the rest in Thyatira, &c.* and to be a collective name expressing all the Elders of that church.

Also some observe, that it might be expressed in the same manner as Gods providence in the administration of the World by Angels is expressed, wherein one being set as chief over such a country, the things which are done by many, are attributed to one Angel president.

It is further to be considered, that in the church of *Ephesus*, one of the seven, the Scripture makes mention of many bishops, who were no other than presbyters, *Acts* 20. 28. Against this some say, That the Elders there mentioned, were not the presbyters of the church of *Ephesus*, but the bishops of *Asia* then gathered together at *Ephesus*, and sent for by *Paul* to *Miletum*. But 1. This is affirmed altogether without proof. 2. The text saith, *Paul* sent from *Miletum* to *Ephesus* to call the elders of the church, which in rational interpretation must be the Elders of the church to which he sent. 3. If the bishops of all *Asia* had been meant, it would have been said the Elders of the churches. For in Scripture, tho we find the Christians of one city called a church, yet the Christians of a Region did ever make a plurality of churches, as the churches of *Judea*, the churches of *Galatia*, and the churches of *Asia*. 4. There is not the least hint given of the meeting of the bishops of *Asia* at *Ephesus*, when *Paul* sent for the elders of the Church. 5. The asserters of prelacy hold that

that *Timothy* was the first bishop of *Ephesus*; now *Paul* did not send for him, for he was already present with him, and accompanied him in his travels: Nor did he commit the charge of the church to him, but to the Elders that were sent for. 6. It could not be the sense of the church of *England*, that those Elders who are declared to be bishops, were bishops in the Vulgar meaning of the word, when she appointed that portion of Scripture to be read at the ordination of Presbyters, to instruct them in the nature and work of their Office.

Some say, That by the Angel of the church is meant the Moderator or President of the Presbytery, who might be either for a time, or always the same person; and the Epistle might be directed to him in the same manner as when the King sends a Message to the Parliament, he directs it to the Speaker. Now such a Moderator or President makes nothing for bishops of a higher order than Presbyters.

## § 12. *A further Consideration of the Office of an EVANGELIST, and of a general Minister.*

Concerning the Office of Evangelists, such as *Timothy* and *Titus*, the query is, Whether it was temporary or perpetual. An eminent Hierarchical Divine, saith, That Evangelists were Presbyters of principal sufficiency, whom the Apostles sent abroad, and used as Agents in Ecclesiastical Affairs, wherever they saw need. Now this description doth not make them of a specifically different Order from the ordinary presbyters, and it seems to confine their Ministry to the Apostles times. *Grotius* saith, they were presbyters tyed to no place, and that many such Evangelists were ordained long after; and thereupon concludes, that not to ordain without a title to some particular place, is not of divine right.

Indeed if the office of an Evangelist be no other than that of a general Minister, or a presbyter tyed to no place, it seems not only to have been requisite in the Apostles times, but to be of standing convenience, if not of necessity in the church. And his not being limited to one church, is but the extending of the common office of

office of a presbyter or bishop, and not the making of a new office. For this more extensive power of a general Minister, is only the having of that in ordinary exercise, which every Minister hath in *actu primo*, by vertue of his relation to the Catholick church (in which Teachers and Pastors are set, 1 Cor. 12. 28.) and into which his ministerial acts of teaching and baptizing have influence; yea, which he hath by vertue of his relation to Christ as a steward to an householder in his Family, and as a delegate to the chief pastor for the calling of the unconverted, as well as for the confirming of Converts. Now the more or less extensive exercise of an Office, is a matter of humane prudence, and variable according to time and place.

But that a general Minister be of a higher order than fixed bishops or presbyters, is not of standing or perpetual necessity. Nor is it always necessary that he be in a state of superintendency over them. Nevertheless, if a superintendency be granted to him by the consent of the churches and pastors, for the common good, or by the Magistrate, as to his delegate in his authority in Ecclesiastical affairs, I cannot condemn it, but rather judge that it may be sometimes not only expedient, but necessary. Yet it is not of divine right, but of prudential determination.

### § 13. *A further Consideration of the Angels of the Churches, and of a President bishop.*

**A**S touching the Angel of a Church, it being a mystical expression in a mystical book, it may be rationally questioned, Whether it be meant of one person, or of a number of Colleagues; as may appear by what hath been already noted. But if it be meant of one person, it is not necessarily to be understood of one that is the sole pastor and bishop of a Church. Nay, by what hath been already noted, it may with as great, if not greater probability, be understood of a President bishop, who is not of a superior order to the rest of the bishops, but the first or chief in degree of the same order, and like the Moderator of an Assembly, a Chair-man in a Committee, and Mayor in a Court of Aldermen.

And for such a presidency, there needs no divine institution, it being not a holy order or office of a different species from that of the

the rest of the Pastors, but a priority in the same office for orders sake: For it is orderly and convenient, that where there are many Presbyters or elders of a particular Church, that for concords sake they consent that one that is ablest among them should steadily have a guiding power among them in the ordering of Church-affairs.

#### § 14. Of the Office of Ruling Elders.

**T**HESE have been commonly called Lay-Elders; but some have disliked that name, alledging that they are sacred officers; but they own the name of Ruling Elders. Now it is to be noted, that the asserters of the divine right of this office, make it not an office of total dedication to sacred employment, as the office of a Minister, but allow such as bear it to have secular employments not only occasionally, but as their stated particular calling; also that they make it not an office of final dedication to sacred employment as the office of a Minister is, but grant that such as bear it, may cease from it, and again become no Elders: Also they make not these Elders to have office power in all Churches as Ministers have, *actu primo*, but only in their own particular Churches and in Classical and Synodical assemblies; nor do they ascribe unto these Elders the power of the keys of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins, which belong to Ministers, nor do they solemnly ordain these Elders by prayer and imposition of hands, as Ministers are ordained.

Now the Query is, whether Christ hath instituted in his Church such a spiritual officer as this ruling Elder, who is not totally nor finally dedicated to sacred employment, but statedly left to secular callings, and hath no office power, no not in *actu primo* in the church at large, but only in his own church, or in such an assembly as that Church helps to make up; nor hath the power of the keys of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins, nor is ordained by prayer and imposition of hands? I say, whether Christ hath instituted such an officer, and authorized him in his name as his steward to admit into or cast out of his Family the Church? I find nothing in Holy Scripture to warrant his divine right; nor can I see in reason how one destitute of the above named capacities can put forth acts of spiritual Discipline, or of binding and loosing in Christ's Name.

In the New Testament there be three significations of Presbyter, the first belonging to age, the second to Magistracy in the greater or lesser Sanhedrim, the third to ministers of the Gospel.

The only place that hath a shew of mentioning the ruling Elder in the Church that is not a Minister of the Gospel, is *1 Tim. 5. 17. The Elders that rule well, &c.* But this hath nothing cogently to evince two different kinds of officers, but that of those in the same office some may be employed more especially in one part of the work thereof, and others in another part, and that the being more abundantly employed in the Word and Doctrine, hath the preeminence. The Emphasis lies in *κονιστρον*, signifying that some did more especially or abundantly labour therein, but not implying that others did not meddle therewith: And learned men observe, that *τιμα* is maintenance, which is not used to be given to this kind of officer, we are now inquiring of: For they are such as have secular employment to live by.

The Enumerations of divers gifts, *Rom. 12. 6.* doth not infer the institution of divers offices: For as he that giveth, and he that sheweth Mercy, may be the same man; so he that teacheth, and he that exhorteth, and he that ruleth, may be the same: For they are all proper acts of the pastoral office: Likewise, in *1 Cor. 12. 28.* those two expressions, *Helps and Governments*, do necessarily infer the institution of two Functions, no more than *Miracles and Gifts of healing* there also mentioned, do infer the same.

§ 15. *That a single Presbyter may put forth acts of Discipline in his own Church without the concurrence of Ruling Elders, that are not Ministers.*

THERE is no necessity of adding the above-named Ruling Elder to the Ministers of the Gospel in the Government of the Church: For Christ hath committed to his Ministers the keys or stewardship of his house; and he hath committed the same to them not only as to a Presbytery constituted of many, but also to each of them as single Presbyters. And where there is but one Presbyter in a Church, his acts of Discipline are as lawful and valid



in his own Church as those that are done by many in a Church where there are many Presbyters : And the contrary opinion is precarious, and not founded in Scripture.

As for that passage, *2 Cor. 2. 6. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment that was inflicted by many* : from thence to infer that a Church-censure may not be administred by one Minister, is to draw a general conclusion from one instance; or because a censure was inflicted by many in the Church of *Corinth*, where there were many Ministers, therefore it ought to be so in all Churches, even where there is but one Minister.

Moreover, if the true nature of a Church-censure were considered, there would be no reason to doubt of its being lawfully or validly administred by one person. For it is no more than authoritative declaring and judging in Christs Name, that such a one is unmeet for fellowship with Christ and his Church, and a charging of the Congregation in Christs Name to avoid him.

Indeed those words of our Saviour, *Mat. 16. Tell the Church*, are to be considered and cleared : For it is from hence argued, that the Church being a collective name, betokens a number, and therefore not one but many are to hear and censure matters of scandal. To which argument it may be first replied, That a Presbytery or company of Presbyters is in Scripture no more called the Church, than one Minister : But the answer is, that by the rule of interpretation words and names must be limited with respect to the matter treated of ; and so the word Church in the said text is to be understood of the Church as governing, and therefore respects not the governed, but the governing-part thereof, which is but one person in a Church that hath but one Bishop or Presbyter. The Apostle wrote his first Epistle to the *Corinthians* to the whole Church, and saith chap. 5. v. 4. 5. *When ye are gathered together to deliver such a one to Satan. v. 13. Put away from yourselves that wicked person*. Now in these places he doth not explicitly direct his speech to the Elders ; but in all reason it must be expounded with respect to the governing-part of that Church, the company of Presbyter.

Tho there be no necessity of a Ruling Elder distinct from a Minister of the Gospel, to the acts of Church-Discipline ; yet in point of expedience and prudence, such as are no spiritual rulers, or have no power formally spiritual, may either by the appointment of the Magistrate, or by the consent of Pastor and People, be

joyned with the Pastor for counsel and assistance, and more satisfactory management of Church-affairs, *Act. 15*. The Church of *Antioch* sent some from among themselves with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, to be present at the deliberation of the Apostles and Elders at *Jerusalem*; and the said Apostles and Elders joyned some of the brethren with them to consider of the matter that was brought before them from the Church of *Antioch*. And Christian Emperors appointed some secular persons as Assessors with the Bishops in Councils. But nothing is to be attributed to these Lay-persons so adjoined, that belongs to the power of the keys committed by Christ to the Pastors only.

### § 16. Of the Office of a Deacon.

THE Scripture makes mention of two Holy Orders: 1. Presbyters, who are also Bishops. 2. Deacons, as *Phil. 1. 1. To the bishops and deacons*; and the third chapter of the first Epistle to *Timothy*, having set forth the Office of a bishop, passeth immediately to the deacon without taking notice of a presbyter of a middle order between a bishop and deacon. And the mention of a middle order is no where found in Scripture. *Clement's Romanus* in his Epistle, mentions but two orders, bishops and deacons. And *Dr. Hammond* grants, That it cannot be proved that in Scripture-times there were any subject-presbyters; and concludes, that the churches were then governed by bishops assisted with deacons, and without presbyters, *vid. his Annot. on Acts 11. 30. and his Dissertation, p. 108, &c.*

They that are agreed, that there is such an office as a Deacon by divine right, are not agreed what it is; yet all are agreed, that it is an inferior order of ministry assistant to the bishop or elder in the affairs of the church; but in what kind of assistance, there is diversity of opinion.

Some hold that this office is to take care of the poor, in receiving and distributing among them the churches Alms. Others hold, that a deacon may preach and baptize, and assist the bishop or elder in administering the Sacrament, tho he may not consecrate the Sacramental bread and wine, nor lay on hands, or ordain.

In the 6. chap. of the *Acts*, if the institution of this office be there related, we find no other ministry there expressly mentioned but *διακονία πνευματική*, v. 2, 3. and in *Phil. 1.* the name only is menti-

mentioned without any specification of the office. In *1 Tim.* 3. 8, &c. the due qualification of this officer is more set forth than the nature and work of the office; yet something thereof may be signified *v.* 13. *They that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree.* Let it be considered, whether by *degree* is not meant a degree in the Sacred ministry, and a step to a higher order therein. *Acts* 8. 5. we find that *Philip*, one of the seven, preached the Gospel in *Samaria*, and his acts there are related, as if he also baptized the converts, *v.* 38. he baptized the *Ethiopian* Eunuch; and *v.* 40. he passed through, and preached in all the cities, till he came to *Cesarea*. Now whether *Philip* did not these things, not merely by the common duty of a Christian, but by determinate ordination thereunto, it may be considered.

Some make two sorts of Deacons, the deacon of tables, and the deacon of the word. But this distinction seems not to be allowed by the Church of *England*, because it appoints to be read, at the ordaining of Deacons both that part of *Acts* 6. that relates the ordaining of the seven for ministering unto tables, and also that part of *1 Tim.* 3. that speaks of the office of a Deacon as a degree in the Holy ministry immediately after the bishop.

Concerning this office I assent to *Grotius*, That the deacons did serve the Presbyters, as the Levites the Priests; but the most laborious part of the deacons office is the care of the poor; and as nothing was lawful to the Levites that was not lawful to the Priests; so nothing is lawful to Deacons that is not lawful to Presbyters in matter of Sacred Administration. And the Bishop or Elder had the chief dispensation of the Churches money; else how could he be enjoined to be given to Hospitality?

### § 17. Of a Call to the Ministry.

Ministers are Stewards, Overseers, Heralds, Ambassadors, which are names of special office: And the holy Scripture declares the perpetuity of this sacred function, *Eph.* 4. 12. in declaring the end thereof to be the perfecting of the Saints till Christ mystical body be compleat, which is not till the end of all things: And tho some offices, as that of the Apostles, were for the first times only, yet others as Pastors and Teachers are for all times; and the reason of the difference is manifest, the work of

the one being extraordinary and temporary, and of the other ordinary and perpetual.

And that the work which is done by ministers be not left in common to all, but appropriated to a special office, or a state of authority and obligation to do that work, there is a perpetual necessity in the Church of God; for it being a work of the greatest importance in the world, it is necessary that there be in some a state of special obligation thereunto, lest being left as every mans work, in the issue it prove to be no mans work.

The ministry being not a state common to all, but a special office, it is usurpation and intrusion for any one to take it up without a due call thereunto, that is a commission or warrant to institute him in it. As none can be a Herald, or Ambassador, or Steward by assuming any of these offices to himself, but he must have commission or warrant from the Prince or Householder; so none can be authoritative preachers of Christs Gospel, or stewards of his mysteries, without a commission from him.

The Scripture declares, That a mission is necessary, Rom. 10. 15. *How shall they preach except they be sent?* That is, without mission none preach with the authority of one of Christs Heralds. Accordingly, a rule is given for calling men to the ministry, which rule is to be kept till the appearance of Christ, 1 Tim. 6. 14. compared with chap. 5. 17, 21. What manner of preaching the Gospel is lawful for them that are no ministers, hath been before spoken of.

The essence of the call to the ministry lies in Christs command to any man to do the work of the ministry, and in his own consent accordingly to give up himself thereunto. The said command is the efficient cause of a mans being a minister; and the sufficient signification of that command, and a mans own consent, is each of them a *causa sine qua non*, or a necessary condition thereof: For it hath been already shewed, it is Christ only that gives the office and power intrinsic to it, and he doth it by his publick standing as in his law. And in proper speaking, it is no more given by man, than the power of a Mayor is given by the Citizens that elect him, or by the City-Officers that are appointed for his solemn investiture.

## § 18. *Of the immediate and mediate Call to the Ministry.*

**T**HE immediate Call to the ministry is extraordinary, and it is either that which is altogether without the intervention of man, as the Call of *John Baptist*, of the twelve Apostles, and of *Paul*, Gal. 1. 1. or that wherein, though God use some ministry of man, yet he makes an immediate designation of the person in an extraordinary way, as the calling of *Aaron* and his sons to the Priesthood, and of *Matthias* to the Apostleship.

They that receive an immediate call, are able to give proof of it either by the gift of miracles, or some other extraordinary testimony of God.

The extraordinary and immediate call did belong to the extraordinary offices; but an ordinary and mediate call to the ordinary standing offices.

It is to be noted, that at certain times in an ordinary office such eminent qualifications and successes may be given to some, as exceed the common measure; yet their call is not extraordinary for the kind thereof. *Luther* in that high and eminent service which was done by him, did not pretend an extraordinary and immediate call. And none of our first Reformers renounced that ordinary call which they had under the corrupt state of the church.

The mediate call is by the intervention of man in the ordinary way of election and ordination; which is so to be understood, that neither the Electors nor Ordainers do properly make a minister, nor give the ministerial authority; nor doth the minister act by authority derived from the one or the other, nor in their name, as their officer commissioned by them; but by authority derived from Christ, and in his name as his officer. It is Christ therefore that gives the office by the standing act of his Law immediately, that is, without any mediate efficient cause, yet by the mediation of men, as designing and inaugurating the person that receives it, as the King is the immediate giver of the power of a Mayor, tho the Corporation design the person that receives it; and God is the immediate giver of the Husbands power, but the application of it to such a person is by the womans consent.

Now

Now in the mediate call, mans part is necessary as well as Gods part, and therefore in no wise to be neglected. For what is done by man, is necessary to give a sufficient signification of the will of Christ, to put this or that person into the Ministry.

### § 19. Of Election belonging to the Ministerial Call.

**T**HAT Election which belongs to the setting up of Government, is not always an act of government, but sometimes of meer liberty, as when a people elect a Ruler over them.

Meer Election to the Ministry made by men, doth not confer the office, nor apply it to the person; but the most that it doth, is to apply the person invested with the office to a certain company in the relation of their proper Minister.

Much controversie hath been about the right of Election, to whom it belongs. The peoples electing of their own Minister is just by the law of nature, if it be not otherwise ordained by positive law; as naturally all men choose Physicians for themselves, and School-masters for their Children, yet in some places and cases it is otherwise ordained, and guardians are appointed by the Supreme Power, and Physicians and School-masters in like manner, yet so as none be constrained to use them.

It doth not appear that the divine law hath prescribed any certain way of election to the ministry as unfixed, besides the mutual consent of the ordainer and ordained. No proof of any, as to the general ministry, being chosen by the people appears in the New Testament. The Apostles and the Seventy had a divine election; *Timothy* was elected by Prophecie; and it doth not appear, *Act. 1.* That the multitude, but the Eleven Apostles set forth two, whereof one was chosen by lot to the Apostleship; and the word *συγκληρονομήσαντες* doth not there signifie a numbring by common suffrages, for God made choice of *Matthias*.

Indeed the election of those seven Deacons, *Act. 6.* is expressly declared to have been by the people: But to this it is said, that it was for the avoiding of offence, and the better to quiet the murmuring among the people. It is also said, that the peoples electing of them to that office was a matter of special equity, because



cause the work thereof, as far as is there expressed, was the distribution of maintenance as there was need in that extraordinary time; for which end there was a trusting of the common stock in the hands of them that were chosen.

But in whatsoever hand the election of a minister lies, the peoples consent is of great importance: For he cannot perform the work of a Pastor to any people without their own consent; it is plain that he cannot guide and rule them in a pastoral way against their wills.

Yet I know not, but that (sometimes) they may be obliged to consent that he be Pastor, when he is by sufficient warrant, and upon good grounds chosen by men for them, tho their refusal may render themselves incapable of receiving benefit by him, and him incapable of doing the work of his office towards them.

But so far as the peoples consent gives the minister the opportunity of discharging the duties of the relation, which otherwise cannot be done; it is much to be regarded in the call of a minister to any people, and the freer the consent, the better it is in respect of the ends of the pastoral relation, and consequently their consent before his admission is most desirable; yet where there is not a consent before, an after consent may suffice.

The people in electing their Pastors, (if they have the liberty thereof) or in consenting to the election made by others, ought ordinarily to be directed by the judgment of other Pastors.

*N. B.* That we may carry the Question from the meer name Pastor to the matter, all these things must be distinctly considered.

1. What Qualifications make a man capable of the sacred office, *sine quibus non*? 2. What maketh a man (so capable) a minister as related to the uncalled world, and the universal Church, obliged indefinitely to do his best for them: and this is Christs mission. 1. By his Word. 2. And his Spirit giving him a true willingness and consent. 3. And by authorized ordainers investing and sending him. 3. What maketh a minister to be such a one, as the congregation is bound to consent shall be their proper pastor? And this is, 1. His special fitness. 2. His special opportunity. 3. And these so judged by the Magistrate, and Bishops, or other Pastors who are meet discerners: and if they be peremptory in their imposition, he hath the greater advantage: In all these aforesaid, the peoples election or consent is no necessary cause. 4. What maketh the man and the Church (or any person) in

*esse relativo*, formally related as *their Pastor*; and *his flock*? and that is *mutual consent*; if he *consent not*, no Magistrates or Bishops command maketh him their Pastor, tho it may oblige him to consent; nor yet if they consent not: As a Father may make it a Childs duty to marry such an one, but its no marriage without consent. 5. What is necessary to the exercise of the office; and that also is mutual consent, as to every proper part, which is a priviledg; which an unwilling person can neither have right to, nor possess, nor use.

### § 20. *Of Ordination, and the moment thereof in the office of the Ministry.*

**O**rdination is an outward solemn setting apart of persons to the holy ministry by prayer and fasting, and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.

As touching the importance thereof, some say that it is the constituting or making of a minister; others say it is the solemnizing of his entrance into the office, or his inauguration thereinto, or his investiture therein, and is of the same moment to the ministry with the solemnizing of marriage to the conjugal relation, the delivery of a twig and turf to the possession of land. These different ways of expression being considered, may be found to come to the same issue; and the latter may sufficiently set forth the making of a minister as far as mans act can make him.

The words by which that which we call ordination, is set forth in Scripture, are, 1. *χοιρονομία*, *Act. 14. 24.* which doth not necessarily evince an ordaining by suffrages, but in the New Testament it is used to signify an ordaining to the office whether by God or man (as hath been before noted): But if the Text were thus to be read, *They ordained them Elders by the suffrages of the people*; yet it is plain, that not the people, but *Paul and Barnabas* ordained them. 2. *καταστήσας* *Tir. 1. 5.* Which signifies to constitute. 3. *απορίζων* *Act. 13. 2.* Which signifies to separate or set apart.

Now the latter way of expressing the force of ordination, *viz.* The solemn inauguration or investiture in the office, is a separating of one unto it, or a constituting of one in it in that sense that mans act of ordainning can bear: For it cannot be the act of

of an efficient cause making and giving the office and power thereof : For that ( as hath been already shewed ) is not the act of man, but of Christ alone : But it is a necessary ordinary antecedent, and that the most important, as being the last and most compleat designation made by men of the person on whom Christ confers the office, and the solemn investing of him in it.

Hence it follows, that tho ordination be ordinarily necessary to the ministry, yet it is not of that absolute necessity in all cases, as that there can be no lawful or valid ministry without it ; for where it cannot be had, there may be otherwise a full signification of the will of Christ, that some persons should do the work of the ministry. Moreover the work of the ministry is a necessary means of saving souls, of upholding and perpetuating a Church unto Christ upon earth, of maintaining soberness, righteousness and godliness of life among professed Christians; and that some take this work upon them, is an obligation of the Law of Nature, and indispensable ; But regular ordination is but a point of order, and for the interruption or cessation of this latter, the former is not to be broken off or cease : And if there be in any an obligation stately to do this work, he is in the office of the ministry.

If any alledg that Christ by his law hath made an uninterrupted regular ordination indispensably necessary to the ministry, he is bound to prove it. If any pretend an uninterrupted regular ordination of all his predecessors, he is bound to make it clear. Christ indeed hath instituted a ministry for the compleating of his church unto the consummation of all things ; he hath also promised his Apostles, and his ministers successively in them, that he will be with them alway to the end of the world : But I find no promise of an uninterrupted succession of regularly ordained ministers.

That which is delivered by ordination, is the sacred ministerial office at large as respecting the universal Church, to be exercised here or there according to particular calls and opportunities.

## § 21. Of Prayer and Fasting, and Imposition of Hands in Ordination.

**P** RAYER is such a duty, as is requisite to the sanctifying of all other duties, as the preaching of the Word, administration of Baptism; and the Lords Supper; and therefore is necessary to this sacred action of ordaining ministers. Fasting is a service expressive of solemn humiliation, and a necessary adjunct of extraordinary prayer for the obtaining of more special mercy, and therefore a necessary preparative and concomitant in this solemnity: And we have Scripture Examples for prayer and fasting in the mission of persons to the work of the ministry, *Luke* 6. 12, 13. *Act*. 13. 2. *Act*. 14. 23.

What imposition of hands imports, and the moment of it, is to be considered from the use of it both in the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament 'twas used, 1. In solemn benediction, the person blessing laid his hand on the person blessed, *Gen*. 48. 14. 2. In offering Sacrifice, as a sign of devoting it to the Lord by him that offered it, *Lev*. 1. 4. 3. In ordaining to an office as a sign of setting apart therunto, *Numb*. 27. 18, 20. In the New Testament it is used, 1. in blessing, *Mark* 10. 16. 2. In curing bodily diseases, *Mark* 16. 18. *Luke* 13. 13. *Acts* 19. 11. 3. In conveying the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, *Acts* 8. 17. *Acts* 19. 6. 4. In ordaining ministers, *Acts* 6. 6. *1 Tim*. 4. 14.

The meaning of imposition of hands spoken of *Heb*. 6. 2. is diversly taken; some take it as used for the remitting of sins (as they also do *1 Tim*. 5. 22.) and say that Baptism refers to the making of proselytes, and laying on of hands to the absolving of penitents. Others take it for confirmation. Others conceive that the whole ministry is by a *synecdoche* therein comprehended.

From the various uses of this Rite, we collect, that it was a sign of conveying a benefit, or of designing to an office, or of devoting one to the Lord; and particularly, of authoritative benediction and designation to the office of the ministry, and of devoting to the Lord in that kind.

There is no sufficient reason to make it but a temporary Rite, and to limit the use of it in ordination only to the times of miracles; there being no circumstance in any Text to shew that it was done

done only for the present occasion. And we read not that miraculous gifts were given by imposition of hands in ordination.

§ 22. *The power of Ordaining belongs to the Pastors of the Church.*

SOME give this reason why the power of Ordination is not in the people, but in the Pastors, because the act of ordaining is a potestative or authoritative mission, which power of mission is first seated in Christ, and from him committed to the Apostles, and from them to the Bishops or Elders. But this Reason must be taken with a grain of salt, or in a sound sense, because Bishops or Elders have spiritual power *formaliter*, but not *efficienter*; and they do not properly make or give the ministerial power, but are only instruments of designation, or application of that power to the person to whom Christ immediately gives it by the standing-act of his Law.

That the power of ordaining belongs not to the people, but to the Church-officers, first appears by Scripture-authority, for that in all the New Testament there is no example of ordination by any of the Laity, but contrariwise it is therein expressly committed to spiritual officers. 2. By Reason, for that the Pastors of the Churches are better qualified for the designation of a person to the Holy ministry, and for performing the action of solemn investiture; as also, for that ordination includes an authoritative benediction, and that is to come from a Superior, as the Scripture saith, *The less is blessed of the greater, and not the greater of the less*, as it would be if the Pastor were to be ordained by the people that are governed by him.

Some argue for a popular ordination, because election, which is the greater, belongs to the people. But 1. Election is not greater than Ordination in the ministerial Call. For in ordination, investiture in the Function it self is given; but in the peoples election, no more is given than the stated exercise of the ministry in that Congregation.

2. In case Election were greater than Ordination, yet the consequence holds not. Several parties may have each their own part divided to them; and he that may do the greater, may not always do the lesser, unless the lesser be essentially included in the greater, which is not in this case. Lr

It is likewise urged for popular ordination, That in the consecration of the *Levites*, the children of *Israel* laid their hands upon them, *Numb* 8. 11. To this it is answered, That the *Levites* were taken by God instead of the first born of all the children of *Israel*, which the Lord claimed as his own upon the destroying of the first-born of the *Egyptians*; and so the imposition of hands by the first-born upon the *Levites*, was not strictly an ordaining of them to their office, but an offering of them as a sacrifice in their own stead to make an atonement for them, as he that brought a sacrifice, laid his hand on the head of it.

Tho in *Timothy's* ordination, the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery be mentioned, and where many Presbyters were, they joined in this action; yet I see not any thing in Scripture or Reason to gain say the validity of ordination by a single Bishop or Presbyter. Nevertheless, ordination by the imposition of many hands, is more unquestionable, and the use thereof most laudable, and in no case to be omitted where it may be had, according to the custom of the Church in all ages.

### § 23. *The Validity of Presbyterian Ordination.*

**I**F a Bishop and Presbyter of divine institution be the same ( as hath been before proved ) the controversy about ordination by Presbyters is at an end. And if the Bishop that now is, be another kind of officer than the Scripture Presbyter, there is no proof of his divine institution.

That the Presbyter that now is, hath the Pastoral or Episcopal office, hath been already proved by the form of their ordination, and by the nature of that power of the keys that is granted to reside in them. If the Prelates have invested them with an office that is truly Episcopal, it matters not whether in express terms they gave them the power of ordaining or no, or whether they expressly excluded the power of ordaining: for not they, but Christ makes the office, and not they but Christ gives the power that belongs to the office, from which they cannot detract.

The ordination of *Timothy* is said to be by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, *1 Tim.* 4. 14. If it be said that by the Presbytery is meant a company of Bishops; it is granted that Presbyters and Bishops were all one. If it be said, they were a company of



of none but Diocesan Bishops, that had subject-presbyters of an inferior order under them, let it be proved from Scripture.

It is said by some, That only the Diocesan Bishops ordain authoritatively, and the Presbyters concomitantly, founding the distinction on those two Texts, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. and 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. it being said in the one, That *Timothy* received the gift by the putting on of *Paul's* hands; and in the other, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. To this it is answered, 1. That the imposition of hands mentioned 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. might be in confirmation; for the first receiving of the Holy Ghost after Baptism, and the following effects of the spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind, argue so much. 2. If any of a higher state than Presbyters laid hands on *Timothy* in his ordination, yet the phrase of Presbytery argues that they did it as presbyters. 3. If it was *Paul*, that ordained *Timothy* authoritatively, and the presbytery but concomitantly, our bishops cannot thence claim the sole authoritative ordination, for *Paul* was of an order above them, and was no otherwise a bishop than as having Episcopal power eminently contained in his Apostolick office. 4. If the presbytery there mentioned be a company of bishops of an order superior to presbyters, it will follow by this distinction, that such a bishop ordains not authoritatively but concomitantly. 5. The said Texts afford no ground for the distinction of authoritative and concomitant ordination.

According to the hierarchical principle, the bishop is enabled to give orders; not by his power of jurisdiction, but by his power of order. Now a presbyter hath as much of the Character and Sacrament of order, as a bishop; and the consecration of a bishop is not held a distinct Sacrament of order from the ordination of a presbyter; and the truth is, the form of consecrating a bishop according to the English Ordinal, is expressive of no more power of order than is given to the presbyter in the form of his ordination in the said Ordinal.

The conjunction of Presbyters with the Bishop in the present form of ordination, shews that the order is conveyed by them as well as by the bishop. Their imposition of hands is an authoritative benediction, and dedication of the party ordained. Let any instance be produced of the imposition of hands by any such as had no power of conveying that which was signified by that ceremony; I mean of conveying it so far as man's act can reach unto.

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To say it is only a sign of their giving consent, is a poor evasion, for the people give consent also.

If presbyters are at any time allowed to ordain by commission from a Bishop, they cannot do it rightly, if they have not an intrinsic power of doing it. For the Bishops commission or license cannot give a new spiritual power to a Presbyter, which was not in him before, at least radically or habitually.

#### § 24. *Of a valid Ministry.*

**A**S Christ allows the Church to receive such to Baptism and the Lords Supper, as he doth not receive; so he allows the Church to call some to the Ministry, whom he doth not call. For it is his prerogative to be the Searcher of the Hearts, and men can judge but by appearance.

Such as Christ doth not allow the Church to call to the Ministry, may by his permission, through the Churches mal-administration, be called thereunto; and being so called, they abide therein by his permission, till they be cast out by due reformation, and so long their calling is valid as to external order.

And such are Ministers to others, tho' not to their own good; and Christs ordinances by them administered are valid and effectual to those intents for which he appointed them. The whole current of Scripture shews that Gods ordinances are not made void by the close hypocrisy or gross impiety of the dispensers thereof; and the contrary opinion tends to unchurch Churches, and to deny the Christendom of the Christian World for the most part.

As we must distinguish between miscarriages in admission, and the nullity of the office, so between defects or corruptions in the office itself, and the nullity thereof. The Priesthood and Worship in the Temple at *Jerusalem* was often much corrupted, yet it was true for the substance thereof; but the Priesthood appointed for the *Galutes* at *Dan* and *Bethel* was false for the substance, and a nullity.

Tho' the sacrificing Priesthood at *Dan* and *Bethel* were a nullity, yet the Ten Tribes had the substance of the true religion, and some external acts of worship true and valid, as circumcision, and so retained something of a Church. So now among the Papists, there is the substance of the Christian Religion, and something of a Church

Church, and Ministry, and ordinances. The Ministry of the Popish Priests with reference to the Sacrifice of the Mass, is a nullity: but as ordained to preach the Gospel and Baptize, and to any other parts of the proper work of the Ministry, it is not a nullity, but their administration in those things is valid.

## § 25. *Of the Magistrates Power in Ecclesiastical Affairs.*

**M**agistratical and Ecclesiastical power are in their nature wholly divers; and they are not subordinate but collateral powers; yet Ministers are subject to Magistrates, and Magistrates to Ministers in divers respects, according to the nature of the power that is seated in either of them.

The Magistratical power is Imperial, the Ecclesiastical is ministerial; and so the pastor is under the magistrate as his Ruler by the sword, not only in civil, but in sacred things; and the magistrate is under the pastor as his Ruler by the word, or his authoritative teacher.

The pastors power over the magistrate is no diminution to his right, for it takes away none of his authority, nor doth it hinder the exercise and efficacy of it, but it is his benefit, because it is an authoritative administering to him the mercies of the Gospel in Christs Name; and if he be not under that authoritative administration, he is not under the blessing of the Gospel. Howbeit the pastoral discipline may not be so exercised towards the supreme magistrate, as by dishonouring him to make him less capable of improving his office to the common good, which the excommunicating of him would do; but if magistrates, whether of higher or lower rank, be excommunicated, nevertheless they must be obeyed.

The magistrates power over the pastor is no diminution to his spiritual authority, for it is not given to hinder but to further the efficacy and exercise thereof: So that both powers are mutually preservative and accumulative, not destructive or diminutive.

The Church is Christs family, and the magistrate is not the Lord, but a member of it, and cannot govern it at his pleasure, but only as the Lord himself hath allowed, and the State thereof requires.

requires. In short, the magistrate as well as the minister hath received his authority for edification, not for destruction.

The magistrate cannot make any new essential or integral part of religion either Doctrine of Faith or Divine Worship : but he is as much bound up to the religion that is of Gods making, as the meanest of his Subjects ; for he and they are Gods Subjects both alike : But by his civil sanctions he may strengthen the true religion, and enforce the observance of the Divine Laws, so far as it is meet they should be enforced by Humane Laws ; and this is the most noble part of his work in matters of Religion.

The Magistrate may and must take care that sacred things be duly administered by sacred or spiritual officers, and he may and must punish them for mal-administration. He may and must restrain persons of impious principles from venting their wicked errors, and from any open impious practice, by a power formally civil, tho objectively ecclesiastical. He may convocate synods or councils of ecclesiastical persons to advise and conclude according to the Word of God, how the Church being corrupt, is to be reformed, and how to be guided and governed when reformed : And he ought to use his own judgment of discretion concerning the decrees and judgments of ecclesiastical persons in reference to his own act of political ratifying the same.

The Magistrate cannot make any new kind of sacred or spiritual office, because he cannot institute any new sacred work, and the work that Christ hath instituted hath an officer of his own institution, already appointed for it ; also because a spiritual office is to be administered not in the Magistrates, but in Christs Name ; yet he may make new offices for civil service about sacred things.

He cannot appoint any thing in religion, that is forbidden by the divine laws, nor forbid any thing appointed by the divine laws. All his authority being from God, cannot be against him : And therefore such injunctions and prohibitions can lay no obligations of obedience upon the subject. Hereupon he cannot forbid the preaching of the Gospel, or the administering of Sacraments ; for then it were at his pleasure, whether Christ should have a Church or Kingdom upon earth. He cannot take one part of the Pastors office from him, while he continues him the exercise of the other, for that were to maim and mar the office. He cannot deprive a Pastor of his Pastoral office, or discharge him from fulfilling his Ministry, because it is held from Christ, and not from him. He may

may not compel a minister to give the Sacraments to whom he pleases, nor may he compel any to profess either in word or deed what they believe not, or to take that which God hath made the special privilege of Believers.

The accidental parts, modes, and circumstances of Religion which are necessary in general, and left undetermined of God in particular, the Magistrate hath power to determine according to the general rules of Gods Word.

Forasmuch as the Divine Law doth constitute more particulars, and leaves less to humane liberty, and God is more jealous and conscience more scrupulous in sacred than in common things, it behoves the Magistrate to be wary, humble, and sober in his determinations about these matters. He may regulate the preaching of the Gospel, provided that regulation be for the furtherance, not the hinderance thereof: And that can be no part of due ordering, that causeth the destruction, or dangerous detriment of the thing ordered.

The Magistrate may not appoint that which is not simply forbidden of God, if it be scandalous, or mischievous in the consequents; nor may he forbid that which God hath not appointed, but left indifferent, if the omission of it be scandalous, or mischievous in the consequents; because in such cases, God hath forbidden the former and required the latter by his general command; and because the Magistrate hath his authority (as was said) for edification, not for destruction.

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CERTAINTY and INFALLIBILITY.

§ 1. *Of Certainty in general.*

**I** Begin the enquiry, by taking notice of the common distinction of objective and subjective Certainty. Objective Certainty, or Certainty in the object, is the immutable verity of the thing it self. For that a thing is what it is, is unchangeably true. Subjective Certainty is the firmness of assent to a thing apprehended as it is. It is this latter which I enquire into, and it presupposeth the former.

It must be supposed that our faculties are true; that is, that in their sound state, and set in due circumstances, they are adapted to discern things as they are indeed. Otherwise the question of the nature of Certainty is out of dores, there being no such thing in the world.

Certainty of Assent includes three things: 1. That it be firm, without staggering. 2. That it be true, and not erroneous. 3. That it rest upon firm and sure grounds. The first is evidently necessary, because it is the very notation of the word Certainty; the notion we mean thereby, is not to doubt or stagger in our apprehension of a thing. The second is as evidently necessary; for Certainty is an affection of knowledge; but an erroneous apprehension is not knowledge, but ignorance; a confident mistake cannot be certainty. The third also is clear; for if the grounds be either false or weak, the knowledge built thereon cannot be sure. Tho the assent be true in respect of the object, yet it is not certain in this case, because not judicious nor solid; yea, tho the apprehension be according to the thing, yet as far as it rests upon a false or weak ground, it is not knowledge properly so called, but a casual confidence

dence or presumption; and when the insufficiency of the grounds shall appear, the apprehension fails, and vanisheth away.

Meer probability is not Certainty strictly so called; it is indeed an affection or mode both of knowledg, and of error, which is a kind of ignorance: for that which is only probable, may either be, or not be what it is apprehended to be; and so the apprehension thereof may be either true or false, either knowledg or error. Yet the apprehending of a probable thing only as probable, is always a right apprehension; for whether the thing be or not be, it is certainly true that it is probable.

The reason of probability lies in a sufficient evidence that a thing not only may be, but is so indeed, rather than not so, as it is apprehended to be. The reason of Certainty lies in a sufficient evidence, that a thing must needs be as it is apprehended: For if there be not such evidence, then if we indeed consider the matter, we presently apprehend, that in regard the thing may be otherwise, it is so for ought we know, and that our apprehension or opinion about the thing is false for ought we know. That there is necessarily some kind of *needs must be*, in the object of a certain, that is, a firm assent, seems to me to have self-evidence, and to need no proof.

An Object or Matter of Certainty being that which is in some respect necessary, or that cannot but be so, is to be understood not only of absolutely, but hypothetically necessary; and of a thing necessary not only in regard of essence or abstracted nature, but by necessity of existence in this sense, *viz.* Whatsoever is, whilest it is, necessarily is; and that which hath been, necessarily hath been; and that which shall be, necessarily shall be, because it is a contradiction to be and not to be.

The surer the grounds are, and the greater the evidence is in the kind of probability, the nearer it approacheth to certainty; and the weaker the grounds are, and the lesser the evidence is, the farther it is from it: Therefore very high degrees of probability commonly borrow the name of certainties, and the minds of men do ordinarily rest therein. The business of men as to this world generally proceeds upon no better assurance, than high degrees of probability.

Learned men speak of a conjugal certainty or opinion that excludes doubting. I contend not about the name, provided the ambiguity be taken away: If by doubting they mean a fluctuation,

on or not fixing of assent; and by certainty, a fixed assent, I grant that in this sense there is a conjectural certainty, when the mind saith undoubtedly the thing is so, and reason will not suffer me to judge otherwise: But I judge, that certainty properly so called, is an assent excluding not only fluctuation, or non-fixation or suspense, but also an apprehension that the thing may be otherwise; and it rests upon no evidence inferior to that which is called demonstrative; an assent whereby the mind saith not only, I believe that I am not herein deceived; but also I believe that I cannot herein be deceived: For if I believe only that I am not deceived, but not that I cannot be deceived herein, I am not sure that I am not deceived herein; for it may be otherwise than I apprehend; and for ought I assuredly know, it is so; and here is no certainty properly so called. Note, that when I say I can be deceived, I do not mean in every thing, but only *quoad hoc*: For speaking indefinitely, we may truly say such a person may or can be deceived; yet it may be true that in this or that determinate case, he cannot be deceived. The Apostles in their Apostolick Embassy could not be deceived, yet in common matters they might be deceived like other men.

## § 2. Of Moral Certainty.

**L**EARNED men have distinguished Certainty into Moral, Natural, and Supernatural. Moral Certainty is by some set forth to be an undoubted assent upon such grounds as are fit fully to satisfy a prudent man. Natural Certainty is an assent upon such grounds as shew, that in nature the thing cannot be otherwise than it is apprehended. Supernatural Certainty is an assent upon indubitable supernatural evidence.

As to the aforesaid description of Moral Certainty by an undoubted assent upon such grounds as are fit fully to satisfy a prudent man, I conceive it to be not clear enough. For if the grounds upon which the undoubted assent is built, be in their own nature and reason firm and sure, then that assent is natural Certainty. Indeed I find Moral Certainty set forth by others, as that which excludes not only hesitation and anxiety, but all apprehension that the thing may be otherwise, which they call *formidinem oppositi*; and this is given as an instance of it, that *Augustus Cesar* sometime reigned at *Rome*. Now this I take to be all one with Natural Certainty; for that the nature or reason of the thing shews it must needs have been, or the grounds of the assent thereunto air

in their own nature and reason firm and sure, as afterwards shall be further shewed: But if the grounds of an assent be not in their own nature and reason firm and sure, excluding an apprehension that the thing may be otherwise, that assent is no proper certainty at all; as is already shewed.

I grant that a prudent man may and ought to proceed in humane affairs respecting this world, upon grounds not properly or strictly certain; because for the most part, as well in the greatest as the smallest of them, there is contingency: And such matters as have strong probability in them, especially such as are known seldom or never to happen otherwise, may justly beget in men of understanding such assent or persuasion, as they may call, if they please, a moral certainty, and that which may justly remove all disturbing doubts concerning them; so that it would be folly to be interrupted in the course of action upon a conceit that they may fall out otherwise: Nevertheless it is no folly, but a right understanding, to conceive that those very matters may fall out otherwise. No prudent man disturbingly doubts whether any of the persons this day alive in *London*, will be alive to morrow; yet it is not in the nature of the thing certain, that they will, and therefore no man can rightly judge it to be certain: For the contrary is possible to come to pass, at least in a supernatural way; and we have examples of such events, as in the overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* in one day by fire from Heaven, and in the slaughter of 185000 in the Army of *Senacherib* by an Angel in one night.

Wherefore that moral certainty ( if it may be so called ) which proceeds upon such grounds as do not exclude *fermidinem contrarii*, or an apprehension that the thing may be otherwise, I take to be no certainty properly so called: But if any will so call a knowledg or assent of that nature, I contend not about it. But the term may be taken in another sense, viz. for a certain knowledg or assent in things of a moral nature, or from moral arguments, in which I judge that certainty strictly so taken may be founded: And being so taken, it is of the same common reason with the following kinds of certainty: For it is founded in the nature and reason of things moral, as natural certainty in the nature and reason of things natural, and supernatural certainty in the nature and reason of things supernatural.

§ 3. Of Natural Certainty.

**N**atural Certainty is that which is founded in the nature of things natural, and rests upon evidence that is sure in nature, and fails not. This is twofold; first, That which is founded in the ordinary course of particular nature. The second, That which is founded in the universal and unchangeable reason of things.

1. There is Certainty founded in the ordinary course of Nature, or that which rests upon the nature of things, keeping the natural course and state wherein they are set by the God of Nature. So it is naturally certain that the Sun, that is set, will rise again in our Horizon after such a space of time; it is naturally certain, that there will be a vicissitude of Summer and Winter in our Climate; for that it should be otherwise according to particular nature, or in a natural way, it is impossible. These are in Scripture called the Ordinances of Heaven, by the sureness whereof God sets forth the stability of his Covenant of Grace.

But that Certainty is greater that is founded in the Universal and Unchangeable Reason of things, or in the Eternal Law, which is founded in the unchangeable nature and perfections of God; for this can never fail. There is not only an impossibility in the ordinary course of nature, but an absolute and utter impossibility that an apprehension or assent founded herein, should be false. Who in the course of particular nature it be impossible but that the Sun should go down at the stated time; yet it is not utterly impossible that it should not, but it may stand still, or go back in the firmament, as in holy Scripture we read it hath done, and consequently we cannot have an absolute certainty thereof. But we are absolutely certain of whatsoever truth rests upon the unchangeable Reason of things; for the contrary thereof is a contradiction.

§ 4. Of Supernatural Certainty.

**S**upernatural Certainty is an assent upon indubitable Supernatural evidence, viz. Divine Revelation supernatural. A Divine Evidence is the highest kind of proof, and causeth Certainty, if any thing can cause it. For there is nothing more sure in the nature of things, than Gods Veracity. And nothing more is

requisite to the certainty of that which brings a divine supernatural evidence or discovery, than to know that it is divine, or of God.

Wherefore supernatural Certainty presupposeth two things: 1. The natural Certainty of this Principle, That God is immutably true. 2. A natural Certainty that the supernatural discovery, or revelation that is to be the ground of our assent, is from God. Here by Natural certainty I mean that which ariseth from the very nature of the thing, in which there is a full objective evidence. Nevertheless, the Certainty that is natural in the said respect, may in another respect be supernatural, namely, in respect of the supernatural assistance of the mind unto that certainty or firmness of assent; it is natural in respect of the objective evidence of the thing, and supernatural in respect of the assistance of the faculty to apprehend it.

§ 5. *The distinction of Certainty into evident and obscure, considered.*

CERTAINTY hath been distinguished into evident and obscure. Evident Certainty is said to be of those things that are some way clearly perceived, namely, either the first principles, or conclusions evidently drawn from them, or objects of sense. Obscure Certainty is only of those things which we hold by belief, or opinion, namely, things believed upon divine authority, or humane authority, or inferred from signs and conjectures.

But I conceive that to distinguish Certainty into evident and obscure, is all one as to distinguish it into Certain and Uncertain. For evidence is the ground of Certainty; and so far as we have certain knowledge of any thing, so far we have evidence thereof; and no farther than we have evidence, can we have any Certainty. And it rises or falls in the degrees of it, according as the degrees of evidence are more or less. I take Certainty and Obscurity to be opposed in nature. All Certainty connotes knowledge; Obscurity belongs not to knowledge as such, but to ignorance; and obscure knowledge is but knowledge mixed with ignorance.

Especially I judg it much amiss to place the certainty of divine faith under the head of obscure certainty; for that I judg we have



as good and sure evidence for the truth of matters of divine faith as for any conclusion of Science, as shall be shewn.

Howbeit I grant, that things which are most firmly and rightly assented unto, may be in themselves obscure and unseen; as the matters of the Christian Faith, and the Mysteries of the Gospel, that are known only by supernatural revelation: Yet in the certainty or firm assent of the mind about these things, there is not obscurity but evidence, for it rests upon such grounds as are of clear and evident truth, as is abundantly proved by divers Authors, who have asserted the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures.

§ 6. *Whether Certainty admits of degrees.*

Certainty strictly so called, doth admit of degrees. A firm assent without wavering or doubting, may be more firm. My assent to this truth, That there is a God, is firm without wavering; and yet I may have a greater degree of assurance thereof. And doubtless the Angels that behold the face of God, have a greater Certainty or firmness of assent to the aforesaid truth, than mortals upon earth.

The degree of firmness of knowledg or right assent, rises according to the degree of evidence: I say not this of the firmness of all assent, but of right assent, which is knowledg, and in which is true certainty. There may be firmness of assent, which hath no foundation in the thing it self, and the highest confidence in the greatest mistake, but no certainty, which always supposes the true perception of its object.

That that which is now evident or clearly perceived, may become more evident, is a truth which I suppose cannot be denied: And I think common experience confirms it to every observing man, that things sufficiently or indubitably evident, are commonly made more and more evident. By sufficient evidence, I mean that which gives us assurance that the thing cannot be otherwise than we apprehend: There are many divine truths that are now evident, which no true Christian doubts shall be made more evident in the life to come. What we know here, we know but in part, and not perfectly.

The Apostle saith, that that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excels; that is,

that which positively is glorious, comparatively is inglorious : So we may say, that which positively is evident, comparatively is obscure. All our present evidence of divine truths is but obscurity in respect of the glorious clearness that shall be hereafter. In like manner the firm assent of divine faith may be called weak assent in comparison of the assent of intuitive knowledg in the state of glory. The lower degrees of true knowledg, are ignorance in respect of the higher ; and the lower degrees of strength and firmness sufficient in its own place, is but weakness in respect of the higher, especially those transcendent degrees in heaven. And where there is not a privative, there may be a negative imperfection.

#### § 7. *Of the Certainty of Sense.*

**C**ertainty may be either of Sense, or of Reason, or of Belief.

There is a Certainty of sense or sensitive knowledg : And this cannot be denied without denial of all Certainty. 1. Because almost all knowledg comes in first by the senses: 2. All knowledg, which in a natural way, is had of matters of fact, that are contingent, comes either by our own sense, or by the credit of others that have known the same by sense. 3. The Certainty of reason and of belief, may as well be denied, as the certainty of sense : For if there be no certainty of sense, our faculties are not true ; and if the sensitive faculty be false, and not to be trusted, the rational faculty may as well be supposed false and not to be trusted ; and if sense and reason cannot be trusted, the credit of men in their reports made to others, cannot be trusted.

But that there be this Certainty, the sense must be duly circumstantiated, which is, when there is a sound Organ, and a fit Medium, and a due Distance of the Object, &c.

Some supernatural deception of the senses of some particular men, by divine permission, being granted, makes nothing against the natural and ordinary Certainty thereof placed in due Circumstances.

§ 8. *Of the Certainty of Reason.*

**C**ERTAINTY of reason, or rational knowledge, is twofold, or of two degrees. The first, the certain knowledge of the first principles or common notions, which are known by themselves, and appear as they are to all persons, that are *compos mentis*. The second degree is the knowledge of conclusions so evidently drawn from the first principles, as all that understand what they are, must assent unto, unless they offer violence to their faculties.

§ 9. *Of the Certainty of Belief upon Divine Testimony.*

**C**ERTAINTY of Belief rests upon the credible testimony of others.

The Credibility of all testimony rests upon the veracity of the person testifying, and the evidence of that veracity.

The highest degree of Credibility, and consequently of Certainty from testimony, is that which rests upon an immutable veracity, which belongs to God alone. A surer evidence of the truth of any matter cannot be, than a divine testimony thereunto: For there is not a surer and clearer truth, than this, That God is unchangeably true. And this is the ground of that Certainty; which men call the certainty of divine faith, the object whereof can never be false.

The Gods veracity be a principle by it self evident; yet that this or that testimony is of God, may need proof.

A divine testimony may so carry its own evidence to the person to whom it is immediately made known, as to need no proof thereof; as in voices, and visions, and inspirations, tho the way of such self-evidence may be unaccountable by us; nevertheless in the case of such immediate revelations, sometimes holy men have without being blamed, asked a sign for confirmation, and sometimes God hath without their asking, given a sign.

Every testimony, that is by another reported to us to be of God, ought to be rationally proved to be such, or else it cannot rationally be credited, nor be a due object of divine faith, which is a rational assent. To sound faith reason is always presupposed.

There

There are certain rational proofs of a Divine Testimony, that are evident to humane reason, even such as naturally evince the same : And to deny those proofs, were to offer violence to the faculty of reasoning.

§ 10. Of Certainty upon Humane Testimony.

**H**umane Testimony, as such, is not a ground of Certainty strictly so called, but at the most only of the above mentioned conjectural Certainty, that excludes anxiety and fluctuation of mind, but not all apprehension that the thing may be otherwise. Even the testimony of the best and wisest of mortal men, can rise no higher, because there is no mortal man but may deceive, or be deceived.

Upon the same reason that any one man, or number of men, may deceive, every man, and all men may deceive. Wherefore as the bare testimony of one man, or a small number of men by it self considered, is not the ground of strict Certainty ; so neither the testimony of any multitudes, or all men by it self considered, or merely as a testimony by way of its proper authority.

Nevertheless with the testimony of men there may go along such rational evidence, as may ascertain the truth of it in the matter testified, and make it unquestionable. And then it is a ground of strict Certainty; not formally and abstractly, as a testimony; but as accompanied with the said Rational evidence.

This Rational evidence accompanying humane testimony, and making it the ground of strict Certainty, is, when there is an impossibility evident in Reason, that the Witnesses or Reporters should deceive, or be deceived. He that never saw *Rome*, or *Constantinople*, or *Asia*, *Africa*, or *America*, hath strict Certainty, that those Cities, and those parts of the world have been in being, from the Reports of those that have seen them ; for it is impossible in reason that all the Reporters should deceive or be deceived.

Tho it be possible that all the Reporters, considered merely as so many particular persons, may lye ( for if any one may, all may in that consideration ) yet it is impossible that they being such multitudes of several nations, of several ages, of several conditions, and so of several interests and inclinations, should lye or deceive without detection, for there is no possible sufficient cause of such undetected lye ; and we know there can be no effect without a sufficient cause.

If it be said, It is more so, we know what sufficient cause there may be: it is answered, That any such cause is, is beyond humane imagination to assign; and surely this is enough to satisfy that there is none. If there be any sufficient cause of such an undetected lye, it must be either a universal combination of all the Reporters to deceive; and that combination must be held constantly; but this is impossible: or else a concurrent inclination and impulse in all the Reporters to lye, which is unimaginable, and can have no sufficient cause.

Likewise if it be supposed possible that any one person through the deception of the senses may be deceived in a matter of fact of palpable evidence, yet it is impossible (supposing our faculties to be true) that all the Reporters should be deceived in matters so palpable, as that there is day and night; that there is a Countrey called *France, Italy, Greece*, &c. for they could not all be mad or senseless. Or if this were possible in respect of the humane created nature; yet it cannot be conceived without blasphemy, that God should govern the World by such an universal and perpetual deception of the senses.

Now whether this be said to be naturally or morally impossible, it comes to one pass, and gives equal certainty of the testimony from the impossibility of the contrary part. Besides, our Arguing shews it impossible in the reason or nature of the thing.

### §. II. Of the nature of Infallibility.

THE nature, and grounds, and subject of Certainty being considered, I come to consider of Infallibility, which one sort of men lay claim unto without warrant, and some others without reason explode; as a thing transcending all created understandings, tho' they grant a kind of Certainty: as the one by usurped authority impose upon mens belief in the matter of Religion, which is mans highest concernment; so the other take away or lessen that security of the mind, which is reasonably required in so great a matter, and give too great advantage to the pretenders on the other extrem.

The term infallible may be taken first in a passive signification, and then it is that which cannot be deceived: And so it may be applied either to the propounder, or to the believer of a truth. It may also be taken in an active signification, for that which cannot

cannot deceive ; and so it may be applied to the propounder , as also to the truth it self proposed , and to the evidence thereof , as in our English Translation, *Act. 1. 3.* by many infallible proofs, that is evidence that could not deceive.

Infallibility as ascribed to the propounder or believer of a truth, is subjective infallibility ; as ascribed to the truth propounded, or the evidence thereof, it is objective infallibility ; which signifies no more than that the thing cannot be false, and cannot objectively deceive. Now if there may be objective, there may be also subjective infallibility. If there be truth and an evidence of truth that cannot be false, then an understanding apprehending that truth as it is, cannot be deceived therein, nor can deceive in propounding the same to others : Besides, objective infallibility is an insignificant thing in reference to an understanding incapable of infallibility. An object is denominated infallible with respect to the understanding to which it is or may be propounded, as not to be deceived in it.

§ 12. *Of Infallibility which is hypothetical and limited, and that which is absolute and unlimited.*

**I**NFALLIBILITY therefore denoting an impossibility of being deceived, and of deceiving, inquire we into the subject to whom it doth belong. Some say an impossibility of being deceived belongs only to an infinitely perfect understanding. We must distinguish between an impossibility of being deceived, that is absolute and unlimited, and that which is hypothetical and limited. I grant that an absolute impossibility of being deceived belongs not to a finite understanding. And no asserter of infallibility in the creature, intended the former, but the latter kind.

Hypothetical and limited impossibility of being deceived, may belong to a finite, and in particular, to a humane understanding ; and it is that which supposeth a full revelation natural or supernatural to the subject in whom it is, and is limited to the truth so revealed ; and this hypothetical infallibility doth not rest barely upon the perfection of the humane nature, but upon this principle ; That God is true in his revelations both natural and supernatural, and that he doth not govern the world by falsehoods. Now this is proper infallibility : For upon this principle I am not only sure that I am not deceived ; but also that I cannot be deceived



as to the particular truths so evident to me ; or to speak it plainer, it cannot be that I am therein deceived, for it were a contradiction.

Moreover, that which is certain, is so upon necessary grounds, and therefore cannot be false. And he that knows it to be certain, knows it upon those necessary grounds, and consequently that it cannot be false ; and this is to know it infallibly. If we know nothing infallibly, we know nothing either as necessary, or as impossible, whether absolutely, or hypothetically.

§ 13. *Of stated or permanent Infallibility, and that which is but pro tempore.*

**I**T hath been shewed, that an understanding that is not absolutely or by the perfection of its nature infallible, may be secured from possibility of mistake ; and an understanding that is not universally infallible, may be secured from possibility of mistakes, and so be infallible in certain cases, and to certain intents.

Now it is further to be noted, That there may be a stated or permanent Infallibility, and that which is but temporary. The former did belong to the established Prophets of the Lord in their declarations to his people, and to the Apostles of Christ in matters pertaining to their Apostolical Commission for establishing the Religion and Churches of Christ. Also upon supposition of the Saints perseverance, it belongs to all true Christians as to the Essentials of Christianity.

The temporary Infallibility belongs to such persons as receive the Visions of God, or are divinely inspired, not statedly, but occasionally, at some particular time or times ; as among holy men, *Zacharias*, *John Baptists* Father, *Gideon*, the Parents of *Sampson* ; among the unholy, *Balaam* in his Prophecies before *Balaac* ; and *Saul*, who sometime was found prophecying.

§ 14. *The Infallibility of a finite Understanding, further cleared.*

**I**T is granted by the deniers of Infallibility, That that which is true, is not possible to be false. And thence I infer, If I know it to be true, I know it is not possible to be false, and so I infallibly know it. And my assent to a truth ( as for instance to

the Christian Faith) cannot possibly be false.

Some that say, an impossibility of being deceived, belongs only to an infinitely perfect understanding, do grant that an understanding liable to be deceived, may not be deceived, and be sure that he is not. And I infer thereupon, that he cannot be deceived in that particular assent : I mean not that he cannot simply, but in that state and circumstances, wherein he is put; he cannot be deceived therein; and that he knows he cannot, because he knows it implies a contradiction that he should be deceived in that wherein he is sure that he is not deceived : For if I may be deceived in such an apprehension or assent, not only simply, but all circumstances being put, I cannot be sure that I am not deceived therein.

Likewise those that say an impossibility of being deceived belongs only to an infinitely perfect understanding, do grant, that a man cannot be deceived in that thing, with the belief whereof God inspires him, and gives him such evidence thereof as cannot be false. Now this is a concession of hypothetical and limited infallibility to humane understanding : For it is here acknowledged, that there may be such evidence of divine inspiration, as cannot be false : And indeed I take it for a repugnancy in nature, that God should inspire the belief of a falsehood. Nevertheless a man divinely inspired is not simply infallible in his apprehension of divine inspiration; for he may sometime be deceived in thinking he is so inspired, when he is not.

Thus it being evident, that an understanding, that is not simply infallible in a matter, may in the state and circumstances wherein he is put, be therein infallible; I think it better to explain and limit the term and notion of infallibility in the humane understanding; than wholly to reject it. But howsoever, they that reject or dislike it, do grant and contend for a sufficiently certain evidence of truth; and I will not quarrel if that will serve for infallibility.

And they will also grant, that they who are not immediately inspired of God, have sufficiently certain evidence in reason to the discerning and chusing of infallible guides that are immediately inspired.

§ 15. *Whether Infallibility admit of degrees, and in what respect.*

**E**Very truth is equally impossible to be false; for all things that imply a contradiction, are equally, because utterly impossible.

All are alike infallible in that, wherein they are infallible; and therein they cannot be more infallible, because therein it is utterly impossible that they should be deceived, and so it cannot be more impossible than it is already.

Nevertheless there are different degrees of evidence for being infallible in such or such a matter. Likewise there are different degrees of clear apprehension of being infallible; and so the sure knowledg of being infallible admits of degrees. That knowledg that is sufficiently certain, may be advanced to be abundantly certain; and that which is abundant, may be advanced to yet more abundant.

Whereupon I conclude, that though infallibility in its formal reason admits of no degrees, yet there are different degrees of the evidence, and the clear apprehension thereof.

Moreover infallibility is in a more noble and perfect state in one subject, than in another. And so the infallibility of a superior intellect, as that of Angels, is in a more perfect and excellent, than the hypothetical, and the unlimited than the limited.

In the same subject infallibility may be in a more perfect state at one time than another, according to the rising or falling of the evidence thereof.

§ 16. *Of the Infallibility of Sense.*

**T**HAT which is agreeable to sense rightly circumstantiated, is impossible to be false; and that which is repugnant to sense rightly circumstantiated, is impossible to be true. For that the one should be false, and that the other should be true, implies a contradiction, supposing the sensitive faculty to be true. And if the sensitive faculties be not true, it infers that impious and absurd opinion, that God cannot or will not govern the material world but by falsehood.

The Popish opinion of Transubstantiation, is no deception of the sense, but of the understanding; for they that have persuaded themselves to believe it, do not say they see, or taste, or feel Christs body and blood, but acknowledg what they see, feel, and taste, to be the accidents of the bread and wine, which they say remains after Transubstantion. Wherefore the imposing is not upon the senses, but upon the understanding, which ought to judg by sense of matters, that are the proper objects of sense.

### § 17. *Of Infallibility of Reason.*

**I**F Sense may be the subject of Infallibility, why may not the Understanding be so, which is a more excellent Faculty in the kind of perception or knowledg?

If the Understanding be the subject of Certainty, why not also of infallibility in that limited sense, as hath been before explained? The proper object of Certainty is not that which may or may not be, but that which must be, or which is known to be such.

An indubitable Certainty is acknowledged; and from an indubitable Certainty properly so called, I think a good inference is made unto an infallible Certainty. To be indubitable in a matter, is to be sure that I am not therein deceived. And I cannot rationally be sure that I am not deceived, unless I am sure that it cannot be, that the thing be otherwise than I apprehend. And if I am sure that it cannot be otherwise than I apprehend, I am as to that particular infallible.

Because men in their most confident persuasions are commonly deceived by prejudice, from passion, interest, education, and the like, it follows not, that none can be secure from deception; that is, to know that it cannot be that they should be deceived in such or such a matter. Certainly an impartial and unbiassed judgment may be found.

### § 18. *Logical, Physical, Moral, and Theological Conclusions, as well as Mathematical, admit of demonstrative Evidence.*

**U**PON the foregoing enquiries, I judg it very disadvantageous to the cause of Religion, to speak, as some do, of a lower

lower evidence for it than demonstration, and such as the matter is capable of ; whereas I suppose there is not surer and clearer Evidence for any thing, than for true Religion.

Not only Mathematical, but Logical, Physical, Moral and Theological Conclusions, admit of demonstrative evidence.

Whereas some say, the existence of God is not Mathematically demonstrable, because only Mathematical matter admits such kind of evidence ; if it be meant of that special evidence that is in the Mathematicks, it is nothing to the purpose ; but if it be meant of evidence in general, as demonstrative as Mathematical evidence, it is false: for this Truth admits the clearest and strictest demonstration.

This Proposition, That God is, is demonstrative in the strictest sense by a demonstration *a posteriori*, viz. of the necessary cause from the effect ; it being evident, that the existence of God is absolutely necessary to the existence of the World, for that we cannot attribute the being of the *Phænomena* or visible things in the world, to any other cause than such a Being as we conceive God to be, but we must offer violence to our own faculties.

This Proposition, That every word of God shall be fulfilled according to the true and full intent of it, is demonstrative in the strictest sense *a priori*, from the veracity of God ; it being as evident that God is true, as that he is.

As the Existence, so the Attributes of God have demonstrative Evidence, unless you had rather call them indemonstrable principles, as having the greatest self-evidence.

From the Essence and Attributes of God, and mans dependance on him, and relation to him, Moral and Theological Truths of demonstrative evidence are inferred, as touching Gods moral law, the good of conformity, and the evil of inconstancy thereunto, and a just retribution to men, according to that difference.

#### § 19. Of the infallible knowledg of the truth of the Christian Religion, and Divine Authority of the Scripture.

**U**PON the grounds here laid, as the Existence and Attributes of God, and mans dependance on him, and relation to him, and his obligations thence arising, may be demonstrated ; so also that the Christian Religion and the Holy Scriptures are of God as the

the Author, and that the contrary would involve a contradiction: And I take this to have been demonstrated by learned men, and need not here be largely insisted on: Only I shall set down a little of that much that hath been written by Mr. Baxter.

We may infallibly know the Christian Doctrine to be of God by his unimitable image or impression which is upon it, supposing the truth of the historical part. Likewise the truth of the historical part, namely, that this doctrine was delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and that those things were done by him and them, which the Scriptures mention, we may know infallibly.

The Apostles and other first witnesses knew it infallibly themselves by their present sense and reason, with the concomitance of supernatural help in remembering and attesting it.

The first Churches received the Testimony from the first witnesses upon naturally certain and infallible evidence, it being impossible that those witnesses could by combination deceive the world in such matters of fact in the very age and place, when and where the things are pretended to be done and said: And these Churches had the concomitance of supernatural attestation in themselves by the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost, and by miracles wrought by them.

The Christians or Churches of the next age received the testimony from those of the first with a greater evidence of natural infallible Certainty; for that the Doctrine was delivered to them in the records of sacred Scripture, and both the miracles and reporters were more numerous, and they were dispersed over much of the world: and with these also was the supernatural evidence of miracles.

We of the present age receive it infallibly from the Churches of all precedent ages successively to this day by the same way, with greater advantages in some respects, and with lesser in others; not upon the Churches bare authority, but the natural Certainty of the infallible tradition of the Holy Scriptures or records of this religion, and of the perpetual exercise thereof according to those records in all essential points, wherein it was naturally impossible for the precedent ages to impose falsehoods upon the subsequent: And this rational evidence of the Churches tradition was in conjunction with the histories of heathens, and the confessions of the Churches enemies, infidels and hereticks, all which did



did acknowledge the verity of the matters of fact.

There is natural evidence of the impossibility, that all the witnesses and reporters, being so many, of such condition, and in such circumstances, should agree to deceive, and never be detected; for there is no possible sufficient cause that so many thousand believers and reporters in so many several countries throughout the world should be deceived, or be herein mad or senseless; and that those many thousands should be able in these matters unanimously to agree to deceive more than themselves into a belief of the same untruth in the very time and place where the things were said to be done: And no sufficient cause can be given, but that some among so many malicious enemies should have detected the deceit, especially considering the numbers of Apostates, and the contentions of Hereticks.

Besides all this, there is a succession of the same spirit of Wisdom and Goodness, which was in the Apostles and their hearers, continued to this day, and is wrought by their Doctrine.

#### § 20. *Of the infallible Knowledge of the Sense of Scripture.*

**A**S we may be infallibly certain of the Divine Authority of the Holy Scripture, so likewise of the sense of the Scripture at least in points fundamental or essential to the Christian Religion, and that without an infallible Teacher.

We may certainly know, that an interpretation of Scripture repugnant to the common reason of mankind, and to sense rightly circumstantiated, is impossible to be true; if we can certainly know any thing is impossible to be true; and consequently we may infallibly know it.

The sense of Scripture in many things, and those most material to Christian faith and life, is so evident from the plain, open and ample expression thereof, that he that runs may read it, if his understanding be notoriously prejudiced: And if we cannot know the said sense to be necessarily true, we can know nothing to be so, and so we are at uncertainty for every thing.

It will surely be granted by all, that we may as certainly know the sense of Scripture in things plain and amply expressed, as the sense of any other writings, as for instance of the Writings of *Euclid* in the definitions and axioms in which men are universally agreed.

If

If any say the words in which the said definitions and axiomes are expressed, may possibly bear another sense, it is answered, That they may, absolutely considered; because words which have their sense *ad placitum*, and from common use, being absolutely considered, may have a divers sense from what they have by common use; but those words being respectively considered as settled by use, cannot possibly bear another sense, unless we imagine the greatest absurdity imaginable in the Writer. Besides, they that pretend the possibility of another sense, I suppose do mean sense, and not nonsense. And how a divers sense of all those words in *Euclide*, that is not pure nonsense, should arise out of the same words, and so conjoined, is by me incomprehensible.

But if the possibility of the thing be comprehensible, or so great an absurdity be imaginable in a Writer led only by a humane spirit, it is not imaginable in Writers divinely inspired. That the Holy Ghost should write unintelligibly, and wholly diversly from the common use of words in things absolutely necessary to salvation, is impossible.

If an infallible Teacher be necessary to give the sense of Scripture in all things, and no other sense than what is so given, can be safely rested in, then either the right sense of that infallible Teachers words, if he be at a distance, cannot be known but by some other present infallible Teacher, or else that pretended infallible Teacher is more able or more willing to ascertain us of his meaning, than the Holy Spirit of God in Scripture.

To speak of seeking the meaning of Scripture from the sense that the Catholick Church hath thereof, is but vain talk. For first, the Catholick church never yet hath, and never is like to come together till the day of judgment, to declare their sense of the things in question; nor have they written it in any book or number of books. 2. Never did any true Representative of the Catholick Church, or any thing like it, as yet come together, or any way declare what is their sense of the Scripture, and the things in question; nor is ever like to do. 3. Tho it be granted that the Catholick Church cannot err in the essentials of Christian Religion, as indeed no true member thereof can (for it would involve a contradiction); yet there is no assurance from Scripture or Reason, but that a great, if not the greater part of the Catholick Church may err in the integrals, much more in the accidentals of Religion; yea, there is no assurance from Scripture or Reason, but that the whole Catholick

lick Church may err at least *per vices* in the several parts thereof, some in one thing, some in another ; And all this is testified by experience in the great diversities of opinions about these things, in the several parts of the Catholick Church ; yea, and by the difference of judgment and practise of the larger parts thereof, even from those among us who hold this principle of the necessity of standing to their judgment.

Wherefore shall we think that God puts men upon such difficulties, yea, impossibilities of finding out the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures, at least in the main points of Christianity ? Surely God requires of us no more than he hath given, and that is to make use of the faculties wherewith he hath indued us. How can we apprehend any doctrine, or the sense of any written word, but by our faculty of understanding ? And how can we make judgment thereof, I mean a judgment of discretion, but by making use of our own reason ?

This is not to subject matters of Religion to a private Spirit, but to refer them to the Divine Authority of Scripture, to be apprehended in the right and due use of reason, which is a publick and evident thing, and lies open to the trial and judgment of all men.

§ 21. *What Certainty is necessary to the being of saving Faith.*

**T**HUS upon the grounds before laid we may have a natural infallible Certainty of the verity of the Christian Religion, and the divine authority of the Scripture, and of the sense of Scripture. It remains to be considered, Whether the having of this Certainty both of the Christian Religion, and of the Scripture, be necessary to the being of saving Faith.

Here let it be noted, That a person may have some doubting of a matter, whereof he sees no just cause of doubting : And howsoever men may possibly argue against this assertion, yet experience makes it good : And there is sufficient reason for it in the infirmity of our minds contracted by the fall, whereby oft-times we are confident of the things, which we see we have just cause to doubt of, or disbelieve ; and whereby we doubt of the things, that we see we have just cause most firmly to believe. I take this to be evident in that saying, *I believe, Lord help my unbelief :*

*belief*: And against this it cannot be said, here is an effect without a sufficient cause; for tho there be no sufficient ground or reason of the doubt; yet, for it being a defect, there is a sufficient cause, namely, the infirmity of the mind.

He that said to our Saviour, *I believe, Lord help mine unbelief*, had saying faith: And his faith that he professed, and his unbelief that he complained of, appears by the context not to relate to his interest in Christ, but to Christ himself, as able to help him; And so from this instance it is evident, that the not having of an infallible certainty of the object, denies not the being of saving faith, at least, where a man is so far clear, as to see no just cause of doubt, tho he do somewhat doubt.

A man that sees not a sufficient evidence to be infallibly assured touching the firmness of the grounds for the receiving of the Christian Doctrine, and yet sees no sufficient evidence for the rejecting of that doctrine, may from the consideration of the importance of the things therein treated of, and the probability of the truth of those things, be induced intirely and heartily to imbrace that doctrine, with purpose to live accordingly, and to perform that purpose.

That this may be, is evident; for humane prudence doth strongly oblige a man in that case to make such a choice for himself; and if he doth not make such choice, he doth not act with the understanding of a man. But if it be said, that the corruption of humane nature, would be too hard for humane prudence in the case: I answer, That God can give that assistance of his Grace, whereby a mans will shall be enabled to make its choice according to prudence, against its naturally corrupt inclination: And God can give this assistance very congruously, or agreeably to his holy Wisdom.

Whosoever in the case aforesaid doth make such a choice, and live accordingly, hath saving faith: For his so doing doth imply an unfeigned love to, and preferring of God, and Christ and Holiness, above all that is in the world, and so must needs suppose faith unfeigned; and God proceeding according to his Grace in Christ, will not impute unto condemnation such a ones culpable defect of Certainty in the matters of Faith, which doth not hinder his sincere trust in God through Christ, and his intire and hearty love to him.

§ 22. Of our Certainty of being in the State of Grace.

**I**T may lastly be inquired, What Certainty one may have of his being in the state of grace? As for the Certainty of Salvation, that is a different inquiry, and depends on another question, touching the Certainty of perseverance in a justified state, which is not here to be medled with; and we inquire not whether one may be certain of his being in the state of Grace by special revelation, but in an ordinary way.

That any one ordinarily should have certain knowledg of his being in the state of Grace, supposeth his certain knowledg of these two things. 1. That God hath declared in his word, that they which have such and such qualifications, are in the state of Grace. 2. That he himself is so qualified: For it is the conclusion of these two premises, the one whereof is the object of divine faith, and the other of a clear and right self-knowledg. The Certainty of the former, *viz.* That God hath declared persons so qualified to be in the state of Grace, none deny, that acknowledge the Certainty of Christs Gospel. The Certainty of the latter is the matter of debate, whether it be possible, and whether it ought to be had.

It is not inquired, Whether the Certainty of the latter, *viz.* Whether the person himself be so qualified, be a Certainty of divine faith: For the object of such Certainty is only what God hath revealed, that this or that man hath faith and repentance, but this is only a point of self-knowledg.

Here interpose we something of the doctrine of Protestants and Papists about the Certainty of this matter.

The Protestants in asserting, that the Certainty of being in the state of Grace, is a Certainty of divine faith, do mean no more, but that one of the propositions, *viz.* Whosoever unfeignedly believes, is justified, rests solely on the Word of God; and the other, *viz.* I unfeignedly believe, is known by internal sence, and experience. But whether the conclusion, Therefore I am justified, or in the state of Grace, be rightly called a conclusion of divine faith, I leave to others to judg, not caring to strive about words, when the thing it self is agreed upon: And doubtless no sober Protestant will assert that the Certainty which we have of this conclusion, is a Certainty of the same reason, with that which we have of an article of faith, either so firmness or necessity.

The Papists in denying the Certainty of Justification to be a Certainty of Divine Faith, do not deny all Certainty thereof; but mean that it is not of the same reason with the Certainty which we have of an Article of Faith: Because, tho one of the premises on which it is founded, be an Article of Faith, yet the other is known but by internal sense, and the testimony of conscience.

As to the later of the premises, which is known but by internal sense and experience, consider we whether a man may and ought to have a Certainty therein, and of what sort it is. On the one hand, doubtless it is not such a Certainty, as expels all fear of careffulness: On the other hand, it is doubtless such a Certainty at least, as expels anxiety, and is sufficient to settle the peace of conscience: And I think in this both Papists and Protestants do agree.

There is a Certainty that expels all apprehension that the contrary may be true, whereof this is an instance, That there were such persons as *Alexander the Great*, and *Julius Cesar*: and this hath gained the name of moral Certainty, tho I think it may be called natural, as grounded on naturally certain evidence: And that a man may have such a Certainty of his unfeigned faith, is held by Protestants in general, and some Papists.

Nevertheless the Papists in general grant not this kind, but only a lower kind of Certainty hereof, which they call conjectural: yet they tell us, that it is certainty truly so called, that it expels fluctuation and suspense, and brings peace, and joy, and security; and withal they say, that the Just believe indeed, that they are not herein deceived, but not that they cannot be deceived: But how this lower kind can be certainty properly so called, I see not; For an apprehension that the thing is otherwise than I think, excludes all Certainty properly or strictly so called.

The abovesaid moral Certainty of justification, or being in the State of Grace, is not attained by all justified persons; and where it is attained, it is not ordinarily continued without interruption, nor ordinarily in the same degree, because justified persons, even the best of them, do not continue without interruption in the same degree of faith and holiness, on the internal sense whereof this Certainty depends.



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THE  
TRUE STATE  
Of The  
ANCIENT  
EPISCOPACY.

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§ 1: *What was anciently a Bishops Church.*

**T**HE Name Church is the first and only Scripture-name properly belonging to a Bishops charge. In the beginning of Christianity, Bishops or Pastors had their Churches in Cities or Towns : And commonly the Converts of the Adjacent Villages were by reason of their paucity taken in as parts of the City Congregation, and all made but one particular Church, the members whereof had local Communion with each other : Accordingly, the name of city applied to a Bishops charge, could be but extrinsecal, it being not the name of the thing it self, but only of the place where it was congregated. The name of Parish came next in use for the said charge ; And this name is still in use for a particular Church or Congregation, which hath its proper and immediate Bishop or Pastor. The word Diocess, as relating to a Bishop, was unknown for several ages of Christianity ; but afterwards it was borrowed from civil use, and applied to the Church. A Diocess was one of the larger divisions of the Roman Empire, and comprehended several Provinces. Accordingly when

it was first applied to the Church, it was used for the same circuit; and as a Province was the charge of a Metropolitan, who had many Bishops under him; so a Diocese was the charge of a Patriarch, who had many Metropolitans under him: And according to this sense there was a Canon made to forbid the running for ordination, without the Diocese, that is, without or beyond the foresaid patriarchal circuit. But the use of the word for the charge of such a Bishop, as had no Bishops but only Presbyters under him, came up in latter times.

From the first and only Scripture-name properly belonging to a Bishops charge, it is inferred, that a Bishop and a particular Church are correlates. A particular Church as such, hath its own proper Bishop; and a Bishop as such, hath his particular Church, as his proper and immediate charge.

The bishops Church was anciently but one society Ecclesiastical, which might and did personally meet together at once, or by turns, for Worship and Discipline under the same immediate Pastors; which appears by the proofs here following.

1. All the members thereof, even men-servants and maid-servants, as well as others, might and should be known by name to the bishop. *Ignat. Ep. to Policarp. Id. ad Trall.* In the Pannegyrick of *Paulinus* Bishop of Tyre, *Euseb. lib. 10. cap. 4.* It is said, 'Tis the work of a bishop to be intimately acquainted with the minds and states of every one of the flock, when by experience and time he hath made inquiry into every one of them.

2. One Church had but one Altar, and consequently but one stated assembly for full Communion. *Ignat. Ep. ad Philadelph.* To the Presbyters and Deacons my fellow servants. If one bishop must here be taken numerically, so must one altar. The Apostles Canons, c. 5. 32. make it appear there was but one altar and one bishop, with the Presbyters and Deacons, in a church. Also Council *Antiochen. c. 5.* Hereupon Mr. *Mede* saith, that before dioceses were divided into parishes, they had not only one altar in one church or *dominium*, but one altar to a church, taking church for the company or corporation of the faithful united under one bishop or pastor, and that was in the city or place where the bishop had his Sea or Residence. Add hereunto, that to set up another altar, was accounted a note of schism.

3. Each single church had its proper and immediate bishop. *Ignat. ad Philad.* as before; to every church one altar, one bishop!

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He shews also, that without a bishop, the state of a church exists not, *Ep. ad Smyrn.* Wheresoever the bishop appears, there is the church; as wheresoever Jesus Christ appears, there is the Catholic church. A particular church was then no larger than that where the bishop appeared. *Id. ad Trall.* The bishop is a type of the highest father; and the Presbyters are as the *consilium* of God, and the bond of Apostolical concord, *Id.* Be subject to the bishop, likewise to the presbyters and deacons. This shews that the bishop and presbyters were together in one and the same particular church, and jointly took the immediate charge of the flock.

4. Some of the Ancients testify, that the Apostles placed only bishops without presbyters, in some churches. *Epiphan. Heres. 65.*

5. Concerning the largeness of a bishops church, let that instance of *Gregory Thaumaturgus* be considered. He was made bishop of *Neocesarea*, when he had but seventeen Christians; afterwards when many were converted at *Comana*, a small town that was near, he did not make it a part of his own diocese, but ordained *Alexander* the Collier, a right worthy person, to be their bishop. And they were of no greater number than what met to chuse him, and hear him preach.

6. The ordinary work of a bishop, shews that it was but one single church that he had charge of. *Iustin Martyr* setting forth the manner of the church assemblies, tells us, that the President himself preached, gave thanks, administered the Eucharist, and exercised discipline. *Tertullian de corona Militis*, c. 3. saith, *We take the Sacrament of the Eucharist from the hand of no other than of the President.* It is to be noted, that in those times they received the Sacrament at least every Lords day. And it is confessed by Episcopal Divines, that this President was the bishop. But if any say that he was a meer presbyter, they must grant that a presbyter had the name of President, and a governing power.

7. It is much asserted among the Hierarchical Divines, that anciently bishops only were allowed to preach. And if this was so, it was and could be but one single church that a bishop had as his immediate charge; for we cannot imagine that there were churches which ordinarily had no preaching, or in which preaching was not ordinarily allowed; yea, the presbyters might not baptize without the bishops command or consent. This shews that each particular church had its proper bishop.

8. That church in which divine worship was performed, had also discipline exercised in it, *Tertul. Apol. c. 39.*

9. The bishops church was no greater than that all the people could meet together and chuse their bishop. In *Cyprian's* time, at the ordaining of a bishop, the next bishops came to the people, for whom the bishop was to be ordained, and every one was acquainted with his conversation, *Cypr. lib. 1. Ep. 4. Erasmus Edit. to Felix* a presbyter. Nor let the people flatter themselves as free from the contagion of the sin, when they communicate with a priest that is a sinner—They ought to separate themselves from him, seeing they chiefly have the power either of chusing worthy, or refusing unworthy priests. *Sacerdotal Ordinations* ought not to be made, but under the conscience of the assisting people.—The custom is with us, and almost throughout all provinces, That to the celebrating of Ordinations, all the next bishops of the same province assemble with the people to whom the *Præpositus* is ordained. To the same purpose we find much in very many of his Epistles. This was the ordinary course of the first Ages, for all the people to chuse their bishops, and to be present thereat; for which a multitude of testimonies may easily be produced.

10. *Apost. Can. c. 5.* shew, that the bishop with his presbyters and deacons lived on the gifts of the same altar. 'Twas the custom of bishops and their presbyters to dwell together, and be in common.

11. The numerousness of the ancient bishops and their churches, shew, that those churches were of no large extent. In the first council of *Carthage* it was decreed, c. 11. That for examining every ordinary cause of an accused presbyter, six bishops out of the neighbouring-places were to hear and determine; and for every cause of a deacon, three bishops.

It is reported that *Patrick* planted in *Ireland* three hundred sixty five churches, and as many bishops. In the *Vandalick* persecution six hundred and sixty bishops fled out of one part of *Africa*, besides all that were murdered, imprisoned, and tolerated. Many proofs hereof might be alledged; but in general it sufficeth to note, That a great number of bishops could on a sudden meet together in a Provincial Assembly, as in the sixth council of *Carthage* two hundred and seventeen bishops were met. And in the times of persecution under the heathen Emperors, there were numerous Assemblies of bishops when they went in fear of their lives.

12. The paucity of Presbyters in a Bishops Church shews that it was not very large. In greater Churches they had a greater number of presbyters, but in smaller they had often two, sometimes one, sometimes none.

The matter here considered, touching the ancient form and state of a bishops Church, will be further cleared in the following Sections.

§ 2. *Of the place where a Bishops Church anciently was and might be constituted.*

**T**HAT every City, which had a competent number of Christians, had a bishop with his Church, is granted on all sides: And that it was not a bishops seat which made that a City, which otherwise would not have been so, but that every Town or Burrough was a City receptive or capable of a bishop, cannot reasonably be denied. The Scripture useth the word City for any Town or Burrough, Mat. 12. 25. Mat. 23. 34. Luk. 2. 3. Luk. 7. 11. Act. 15. 21. *Crete*, which was called *ἑκατόπολις*, could not have a Hundred cities in it, unless such as our Burroughs; and in every such city the Rule was to ordain elders or bishops, Tit. 1. 5.

What argument from Scripture, or reason, can be brought, why *Worcester, Gloucester, Chichester, &c.* should be made Cities and seats of Bishops, rather than *Shrewsbury, Ipswich, Blimouth, &c.*? In the first ages of the Christian Church all Towns were Cities to this intent without any difference; Yea any places of greater confluence of people were in the same capacity of having Churches.

*Theophilus Alexandrius Epist. Pascal. in Bibliotheca Patrum* 3 Tom. mentions Bishops in very small Cities. *Zozomen* saith, that *Spiridion* was bishop of the Town *Trimythus*, and said to be Keeper of sheep in that Town after he was bishop.

There is also sufficient proof that bishops were ordained in Villages, or in places that were no Cities. *Majuma* was the port of *Gaza*, and because it had many Christians, it was honoured by *Constantine* with the name of a City, and a bishop of its own: And when *Julian* in malice took from it the honour of being a City, it still kept its own bishop; tho it had the same Magistrates

and Military Governours with *Gaza*: And when the bishop of *Gaza* sought to subject the Clergy of *Majuma* to himself, saying, 'twas unmeet that one City should have two bishops, a Council in *Palestine* called for that purpose, confirmed the privileges of *Majuma*, *Sozomen* l. 5. cap. 3.

*Cenchrea* was but a Port of *Corinth*, as *Pyraus* of *Athens*, yet we find a Church constituted there, *Rom.* 16. 1. They who say it was a parish subordinate to the Church of *Corinth*, having only a presbyter assigned to it, are bound to prove it. *Clement* Apostolical constitutions, lib. 7. c. 84. saith, that *Cenchrea* near *Corinth* had *Lucius* a bishop.

*Sozomen* l. 7. c. 19. saith, when throughout *Scythia* there are many Cities which have all one bishop, there are other Nations, where bishops are ordained in villages, as among the *Arabians*, and *Cyprians*, and *Phrygian Montanists*.

In the Council of *Sardica*, Can. 6. it was decreed, that bishops may not be ordained in villages or in small cities, where one presbyter will suffice, lest the name and authority of a bishop should become vile: But this was done in the middle of the fourth Century, and the decree implies, that till then bishops had been allowed in villages and small Cities.

The *Chorepiscopi* were placed in country villages, when Christians grew so numerous as to have Churches in them: and this proves that the Churches then kept in a narrow compass. The Canons made to express this sort of Ministers, and to turn them into the *clandestini* (as the 5<sup>th</sup> Canon of the *Laodicean* Council) do shew that bishops with their Churches had been constituted in villages, tho in some dependance on the City-bishop. *Mr. Beverege* in his Annotations on Council *Ancyran* c. 13. shews, that the *Chorepiscopi* were truly bishops, tho the exercise of some Episcopal functions were denied them by the Canons, and by the Canon last mentioned they were not absolutely forbidden to ordain presbyters and deacons, but that they should not do it without the permission of the City-bishop, under whom they were.



## § 3. Of divers Cities having two Bishops at once.

THE R E are many instances in the antiquity of two bishops allowed at once in the same City: *Narcissus* and *Alexander* were bishops of *Jerusalem* at the same time, *Enseb. Hist.* 1. 6. c. 9, 10. *Ignatius* and *Enodius* were both bishops of *Antioch* at the same time. *Clemens* *const.* 1. 7. 46. At *Rome*, *Linus* and *Cletus* were fellow-bishops in *Peter's* days, *Platina* in the life of *St. Peter*. *Epiphanius*, herely 68. concerning *Meletius*, saith, *Alexandria* had not anciently two Bishops as other Cities had. *Ausbin* was made Bishop of *Hippo* in the days of *Valerius*, and joined with him as his colleague in the Episcopal function. *Aug. Epist.* 34. to *Paulinus*: And some learned men of the hierarchical way conceive that *Peter* and *Paul* were bishops of *Rome* at the same time, the one of the Circumcision, and the other of the Uncircumcision.

The *Nicene* Council was the first that decreed, that universally there should be but one bishop in a City, *Can.* 8. If any that come from the *Novations* to the Catholick Church be a bishop, let him have the dignity of Priesthood, unless it please the Catholick bishop to give him also the honour of the Episcopal Name: If it doth not please him, let him find a place for him, that he may be a *Chorepiscopus* in the parish, or a presbyter in the Clergy, that there may not seem to be two bishops in one City.

As concerning the Catalogues of the ancient bishops in great Cities, wherein the succession is by one single person after another. It may be considered, That Historians being of later ages, had respect to the custom of their own times, wherein the Episcopacy resided in one: And when anciently there were two or more equal in the name and authority of a Bishop, the survivor was reckoned the successor, whenas he was indeed but the surviving colleague: Some do thus labour to remove the contradictions of Historians touching the order of the succession of the first bishops of *Rome*, *Linus*, *Cletus*, *Anacletus*, &c. by supposing that these or some of them were presbyters or bishops at the same time, ruling that Church in common, and that the following writers fancying to themselves such bishops as were set up in the Church in their times, fell into those diversities of tradition.

§ 4. *Of the more late Erection of many Parishes under one bishop.*

**I**T is acknowledged by all parties, that Christians in great Cities were not divided into divers fixed Congregations or Parishes till long after the Apostles days : And tho, when they were multiplied, they had divers meeting-places, yet those places were promiscuously frequented, and the people were taught and governed by all the Presbyters in common, and were called but one Church. It is observed by *Epiphanius, Heres.* 68. n. 6. That it was the Custom only at *Alexandria* to have one president in the whole City, and to distribute the presbyters to teach severally, vid. *Grot. Annot. on 1 Tim. 5. 17. Seldens Comment on Eutyck. Origin. Alexand. p. 85.*

And most agree, that it was two hundred and sixty years after Christ, before parishes were distinguished : And there must be a distinction of parishes, before there could be a union of them into Diocesses.

§ 5. *That Bishops and Presbyters are of the same order. The Testimony of later times concerning it.*

**T**HAT this is not the opinion only of those who are now called Presbyterians, let the testimonies both of ancient and later times touching this point be considered. I begin with those of later times.

The *French* and *Belgick* Confessions assert the parity of order of all Ministers of the Gospel.

*Reynold Peacock* bishop of *Chichester* wrote a book *de Ministrorum aequalitate*, which the Papists caused to be burnt.

Vid. *Erasmus* his Annotations on *1 Tim. 4.*

*Cassanders* consult. Article 14. saith, It is agreed among all, that of old in the Apostles days, there was no difference between bishops and presbyters ; but for orders sake, and avoiding of schism, a bishop was put before a presbyter. This his opinion he delivered to the Emperor of *Germany*, being sent for by him to inform his conscience about such questions.

In the time of King *Henry* the Eighth, there was published a book by *Cranmer* and others called the bishops book, wherein is affirmed, that the difference of bishops was a device of the ancient fathers, not mentioned in Scripture. *An.* 1537. In the book called the Institution of a Christian man, made by the Clergy in a provincial synod, and set forth by the Kings Authority, and approved by the Parliament, it is asserted, That the Fathers of the succeeding Church, after the Apostles, instituted certain inferior degrees of Ministry; yet in the New Testament no mention is made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of Deacons or Ministers, and of presbyters or bishops. The Parliament Divines at the Treaty in the Isle of *Wight* in their Answer to the King, say, This doctrine of the sameness of the order of a bishop and presbyter, was published by King *Henry* the Eighth, *An.* 1543. to be received by all the subjects, and was seen and approved by the Lords, both spiritual and temporal, and by the lower house of Parliament: The words of the book are, *The Scripture mentions these two orders only, to wit, Presbyters and Deacons, and the Apostles confirming them by prayer and imposition of hands.*

Mr. *Mede* discourse 5. on 1 Cor. 4. 1. saith, there are properly but two orders Ecclesiastical, Presbyters and Deacons, the rest are but divers degrees of these two.

Dr. *Hammonds* opinion concerning bishops and presbyters, is thus declared in his Annotations on Acts 11. Altho the Title of Elders hath extended to a second order in the Church, and now is in use only for them; yet in the Scripture-times it belonged principally, if not alone, to the bishops, there being no evidence that any of that second order were then instituted in the Churches. Now if in Scripture-times presbyters of an inferior order to bishops were not instituted (as this learned man supposeth) it is evident, that all those Church-officers called presbyters, mentioned in Scripture, were bishops; and if this inferior order of presbyters be not to be found in Scripture, I desire to know, what proof can be made of its divine institution.

Many, if not most, Papists acknowledg, that presbytery is the highest order in the ministry, and that Episcopacy is but a different degree of the same order: And it is no resolved point of faith among them, whether bishops differ from presbyters only in degree, or in order and office.

*Catalogus Testium veritatis*, Tom. 2 reports, that *Wicklief* held but two orders of ministers, *Walsing. Hist. in Rich.* 2 p. 205. saith, That it was one of *Wicklief's* errors, that every priest rightly ordained had power to administer all Sacraments.

*Dr. Reynolds* in his Epistle to Sir *Francis Knolls* shews, That they who had laboured for Reformation of the Church for five hundred years past, held that all pastors, be they intituled bishops or priests, have equal authority by the Word of God.

*Ockham* a great Schoolman, saith, that by Christs institution all priests of whatsoever degree, are of equal authority, power and jurisdiction, *Catal. Test. Verit. Richardus de Media Villa in 4 Sent. distinct.* 24. q. 2. saith, That Episcopacy is to be called not an order, which is a Sacrament; but rather a certain dignity of an order. Council Colon. Enchirid. Christ. Religion Paris edit. An. 1558. p. 169. of holy orders, saith, bishops and presbyters were the same order in the primitive church, as all the Epistles of *Peter* and *Paul*, and *Jerom* also, and almost all the Fathers witness. *Richardus Armachanus* l. 9. c. 5. ad quest. Armen. saith, There is not found in the Evangelical or Apostolical Scripture any difference between bishops and simple priests, called presbyters. *It. lib.* 11. q. Arm. c. 5. *Johān. Semeta in his gloss, dist.* 95. c. *Oliv.* saith, In the first primitive church the name and offices began to be distinguished, and the prelation was for the remedy of Schism. *Gratian distinct.* 60 c. null. ex. urb. pap. saith, The primitive church had only those two holy orders, presbyterate and diaconate; And *Dr. Reynolds* saith, That this was once enrolled in the Canon-Law for sound doctrine. *Peter Lombard* the father of the Schoolmen, *Lib.* 4. *distinct.* 24. tit. 1. saith the same, and that of these two Orders only we have the Apostles precept. *Sixtus Senensis* heaps up the testimonies of others upon his own, to the same thing.

§ 6. The Testimony of Antiquity for the identity of Bishops and Presbyters.

HERE I first observe by way of preface, That *Michael Medina de Saer. Orig.* accusing *Jerome* of holding the sameness of bishops and presbyters, saith, that *Ambrose*, *Austin*, *Sedulius*, *Primasius*, *Chrysostome*, *Theodoret*, *Oecumenius*, *Theophylact*,

last, were in the same Heresie, as *Bellarmino* reports him, *lib. 4. de Eccles. Milit. c. 9.* The same *Medina* gives this reason why *Jerome*, *Austin*, and others of the Fathers fell into this Heresie (as he calls it, because this point was not then clearly determined of, *Hist. of the Council of Trent. lib. 7. p. 570.* And *Bellarmin. de clero, l. 1. c. 15.* saith, that this *Medina* assures us, That *St. Jerome* was of *Aerius* his opinion in this point. Touching *Aerius*, *Whitaker Controv. 2. q. 5.* saith, that he was not accounted an Heretick by all, but by *Eustathius* who opposed him. *Dr. Reynolds* in his Epist. to Sir *Francis Knolls*, shews out of bishop *Jewel*, that *Chrysostome*, *Jerome*, *Ambrose*, *Austin*, *Theodore*, *Primasius*, *Sedulius*, *Theophylact*, and most of the ancient Fathers, held that bishops and presbyters are one in Scripture, with whom *Oecumenius* and *Anselm* of *Canterbury*, and another *Anselm*, and *Gregory*, and *Gratian*, agree.

### *The Testimony of Clemens Romanus.*

*Clemens* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, mentions but two Orders, Bishops and Deacons. Pag. 96. 'The Apostles preaching through Regions and Cities, did constitute their first fruits, 'proving them by the Spirit to be bishops and deacons to those 'which should afterward believe. With him bishops and presbyters are every where the same. *Ib. p. 4* 'Ye walked in the Laws 'of God, subject to them that have the rule over you, τοῖς ἀρχιερεῶσι, *imais*, and giving due honour to the Presbyters among you, ye 'warned the young men that they should follow things moderate and grave. *Ib. p. 100.* Our Apostles foreknowing there 'would be contention about the name of Episcopacy, for this 'cause having received certain foreknowledge, appointed the a- 'foresaid Episcopacy, and gave Ordination ἱερωσύνη, that if they 'died, other approved men might successively receive their Ministry, ἀντὶ τούτου — It will not be a light sin to us, if we eject 'out of their Episcopacy those that have unblameably and holily 'offered that gift; blessed are those presbyters who are gone before, who have received a fruitful and perfect dissolution; for 'they fear not lest any one should cast them out of the Charge 'wherein they are set. *Ib. p. 108.* Base things, very base and unworthy of Christian conversation, are reported, That the most 'firm and ancient Church of *Corinth* for one or two persons doth 'move

‘ move sedition against the presbyters. *Ib.* p. 120. Who then  
 ‘ is generous among you, and let him say, if the sedition, and  
 ‘ contention, and schisms, be risen because of me, I will depart  
 ‘ whithersoever ye will, and do the things commanded by the  
 ‘ multitude; only let the flock of Christ be in peace, with the  
 ‘ presbyters set over it. *Ib.* p. 128. You therefore that have  
 ‘ laid the foundation of schism, be subject to the presbyters, be  
 ‘ instructed unto Repentance, &c.

These are the passages in that Epistle relating to the point here  
 in question. And who cannot see, that here are only two Orders  
 of Ministers, bishops and deacons; and not three, bishops, priests,  
 and deacons? Also Presbyters, and those in the Episcopacy, and  
 the *ἐπίσκοποι*, are evidently the same. And here is no mention of  
 any office above the presbyters, and to them the church were re-  
 quired to be subject.

As concerning that passage, p. 7. ‘ To the High Priest, proper  
 ‘ ministrations were appointed; to the priests their own place  
 ‘ was assigned; and upon the *Levites* their proper ministry lay,  
 ‘ and the Laick man bound to Laick precepts. I conceive that it  
 alone affords no argument for three Orders of ministry, or essen-  
 tially different offices in the Gospel-church. For it respects the  
 present matter but only in way of similitude, and no more is sig-  
 nified thereby, than as under the *Mosaic* Oeconomy there were  
 several orders, and several ministrations pertaining to them, so it is  
 also in the Gospel-church; but it may not be used in argumentation  
 beyond what is plainly designed in it; much less may it be urged to  
 prove any thing contrary to the tenor of the whole Epistle; besides  
 the High-priests office was not of another kind from the priests,  
 but a higher degree in the same office for some particular mini-  
 strations, which also in time of his incapacity might be ordina-  
 rily performed by another priest. And let the comparison be  
 forced to the utmost, it will shew no greater difference between  
 a bishop and a presbyter, than between an Archbishop and an  
 ordinary bishop.

It is *Grotius* his argument, That this Epistle of *Clement* is ge-  
 nune, because it no where makes mention of that excessive autho-  
 rity which began to be afterwards introduced, or was at first in-  
 troduced at *Alexandria*, by the custom of that church after the  
 death of *Mark*, and in other places by that example. And it  
 plainly shews, as the Apostle *Paul* doth, That the Churches

were



were governed by the Common Council of Presbyters, who were also Bishops.

*The Testimony of Irenæus:*

It is clear that this Father makes the presbyters to be the same with bishops, and the successors of the Apostles; and with him the succession of bishops is all one with the succession of presbyters.

*Lib. 4. c. 43.* We must obey those presbyters which are in the Church, who together with the succession of Episcopacy have received the gift of truth. *Id. l. 3. c. 2.* Unto that tradition which is in the church by the succession of presbyters, we challenge them that say they are wiser not only than the presbyters, but the Apostles. *Id. l. 3. c. 3.* declaring the tradition of the greatest and ancientest church, and known to all, even the church of Rome, founded by *Peter and Paul* at Rome, that which it hath from the Apostles, and the Faith declared to men, and coming to us by the succession of bishops, &c. *Id. lib. 4. c. 4.* We must forsake unjust Presbyters, serving their own lusts, and adhere to those who with the order of presbytery keep the doctrine of the Apostles sound, and their conversation without offence, unto the information and correction of the rest. The church nourisheth such presbyters whereof the Prophet speaks, *I will give thee princes in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness.* *Id. lib. 4. c. 63.* The true knowledge of the doctrine of the Apostles, and the ancient state in the whole world, according to the succession of bishops, to which they gave the church which is in every place, which is come even to us.

From these citations it is evident, that this Father doth express one and the same order of Episcopacy in all presbyters. If any doubt this evasion, that he calls all those that were true bishops by the name of presbyters; let them shew where he mentions presbyters of another order, or makes two different orders of Episcopacy and Presbyterate.

Here I will take notice of the words of *Irenæus* concerning those Elders of the church mentioned *Acts 20. lib. 3. c. 14. viz.* In *Miletum* the bishops and presbyters which were from *Ephesus* and other the next Cities, being convoked. Tho it seems most

reasonable, by the Elders of the church there sent for by *Paul*, to understand the elders of that particular church of *Ephesus*, to which the Apostle then sent ( and indeed if they had been from other Cities also, it would have said, according to the Scripture way of expression, the elders of the churches ): yet admitting what this *Father* saith hereof, observe we that he speaks of bishops and presbyters as congregated in the meeting; and he might mention two names of the same office. And the Apostle speaks to all those presbyters that there convened, as those whom the Holy Ghost had made bishops of the flock. And suppose they were the bishops of *Asia* ( as some would have it ) yet it cannot be proved that they were any other than bishops of single Congregations, or that they were such bishops as had subject presbyters of a lower order under them.

*The Testimony of Clemens Alexandrinus.*

He thus writes, *Stromat. lib. 6. p. 667*. He is really a presbyter of the church, and a true Deacon of the will of God, if he teach the things of the Lord, not as ordained by men, nor esteemed just because he is a presbyter, but taken into the presbytery because he is just——Here in the Church are progressions of bishops, presbyters, deacons, imitations ( as I think ) of the Angelical glory, and of the heavenly dispensation, which the Scripture speaks they expect, who treading in the footsteps of the Apostles, have lived in the perfection of righteousness, according to the Gospel. These, the Apostle writes, being taken up into the clouds, shall first be made deacons, and then shall be taken into the presbytery, according to the progress of glory.

Here this *Father* first mentions only two orders, presbyters and deacons; afterwards a progression of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, as imitations of the heavenly dispensation; but in the close applying the similitude to blessed men taken into heaven, he makes the progress to be only in being first as deacons, then as presbyters, mentioning no higher order. Hence I conceive may be inferred, that he speaks of presbyters and deacons, as of two different orders, and of bishops but as a higher degree in the order of presbyters.

This also may be further confirmed, *Stromat.* lib. 7. p. 700. where distinguishing of a twofold *διακονία* or employment in secular affairs, *viz.* *οὐσιαστικὴ* and *ἐκκλησιαστικὴ*, he saith that presbyters hold that *οὐσιαστικὴ* which makes men better, and the deacons that which consists in service. His meaning is, that as in the Civil State there are two orders, the one governing, and the other ministring; so there are likewise in the Church, the Presbyters holding the one, and the deacons the other. These passages of this Author I thought fit to mention, and have not found in him any more relating to the distinct ministers of the church.

### *The Testimony of Jerome.*

This *Father* also speaks of presbyters as the same with bishops and successors of the Apostles. On the Epistle to *Titus*, c. 1. he saith, As presbyters know that they are by the custom of the church subject to him that is set over them; so let the bishops know that they are greater than presbyters rather by custom, than by the verity of the Lords appointment. He also testifies, that they did and ought to rule the church in common, and that imparity came in by little and little.

In his Epistle to *Evagrius*, he shews that the presbyters of *Alexandria* from *Mark* till *Heracles* and *Dionysius*, had always one chosen out of them, and placed in a higher degree, and named bishop; as if an Army made an Emperor; and Deacons chose one whom they knew industrious, and called him Arch-deacon. Here he mentions no other making of bishops, than by presbyters. And that the presbyters made the bishop, is an argument brought by him to prove the identity at first, and afterwards the nearness of their power. And he ascribes to presbyters the making of their bishop, and placing him in a higher degree, and naming him bishop. And he distinguisheth the ancient way of making bishops by presbyters, from that way of making them which followed the times of *Heracles* and *Dionysius*, which was by Episcopal ordination.

This evidence is confirmed by the testimony of *Eutichius*, Patriarch of *Alexandria*, who out of the Records and Traditions of that Church, in his *Arabic* Originals, saith, according to *Seldens* Translation, in his Commentary, p. 29, 30. That the presbyters laid hands on him whom they elected, till the time of

*Alexander* Patriarch of *Alexandria*; for he forbade the presbyters any longer to create the Patriarch; and decreed that the Patriarch being deceased, bishops should convene and ordain one to the Patriarchate, and that they might chuse the Patriarch out of any Region.

*Jerome*, as an Historian only, mentions from the testimony of *Eusebius*, some bishops made by the Apostles. But who can prove that those bishops were of a higher order than Presbyters?

*The Testimonies of other Ancients in the same point.*

*Cyprian lib. 3. Epist. 9. Erasmus his Edit. to Rogatianus.* 'The Deacons must remember, that the Lord chose Apostles, that is bishops and *Præpositi*; but after the ascension of the Lord, the Apostles made Deacons to themselves, as ministers of their Episcopacy, and the church. Here are but two Orders mentioned, 1. bishops and *Præpositi*, who were as the Apostles. 2. Deacons, who are ministers to them and the church.

*Id. lib. 1. Epist. 11. to Pomponius*: When all ought to maintain discipline, much more the *Præpositi* and the Deacons. From this and the other place before cited, it may plainly appear, that there was no middle office between that of the *Præpositi* and the Deacons. And all the Presbyters being *Præpositi*, must needs be of the same Order with bishops, that title importing the very nature of the bishops office.

*Chrysostome* on the first to *Timothy*, confesseth that there is little or no difference between a bishop and a presbyter.

That a bishop had not a different ordination from a presbyter, *Ambrose* shews on 1 *Tim. c. 3.* in these words: 'Why after the bishop doth he come to the ordination of a deacon? Why, but because there is one ordination of a bishop and presbyter; for either of them is a priest, but the bishop is the first: every bishop is a presbyter, but every presbyter is not a bishop; for he is a bishop who is first among the presbyters. Here note, that the difference lies in this, that the bishop is the first among the Presbyters.

*Vid. Sedulius on Tit. 1. Anselm of Canterbury on Phil. 1. Bede on Acts 20. Alcuinus de divinis officiis c. 35, 36.* all agreeing in this point.

§ 7. *Testimonies to prove, That the Episcopal Authority is really in the Presbyters.*

1. **T**HAT Presbyters have the power of the keys, and that the Apostles received it as Presbyters, is commonly agreed on all sides. Mr. *Thorndike* in his form of primitive Government and Right of Churches, p. 128. saith, That the power of the keys, that is, the power of the Church, whereof that power is the root and source, is common to bishops and presbyters. Bishop *Morton* in his Apology, Dr. *Field*, and many others, say much more.

2. Presbyters have the power of jurisdiction and discipline, particularly of excommunication and absolution. *Spalatensis* proves, that the power of excommunication and absolution is not different from the power of the keys, which is exercised in foro penitentiali, and is acknowledged to belong to presbyters, L. 5. c. 9. n. 2. l. 5. c. 2. n. 48, &c. *Jerome* in his Epistle to *Heliodor*, saith, *If I sin, a presbyter may deliver me to Satan*. In the Church of England a presbyter is let to pass the sentence of excommunication in the Chancellors Court, tho he doth but speak the words when the Court bids him. *Tertullian* in his Apology c. 59. saith, that *probati quique seniores*, all the approved Elders did exercise discipline in the Church.

*Clemens Alexandrinus Strom.* l. 7. saith, that in the Church the presbyters keep that discipline which makes men better. *Irenaeus* l. 4. c. 44. With the order of presbytery they keep the doctrine of the Apostles sound, and their conversation without offence, unto the information and correction of the rest. This place shews, that discipline for correction as well as doctrine for information, did belong to the presbyters. *Epiphanius haeres.* 42. reports, that *Marcion* was expelled by the Roman presbyters, the Sea being vacant. *Id. Haeres.* 47. That *Noetus* was convicted, judged, and expelled by a session of presbyters. Many Diocesses have been long without bishops upon several occasions, and governed all that time by presbyters. *Vid. Blondels Apol. sect.* 3. p. 183, 184. The Church of England allows presbyters in the Convocation to make Canons. Also it allows presbyters to keep persons from the Communion of the Church for some offences, and to receive them again



again if they repent. To say that the presbyters cannot exercise this power without the bishops consent, doth not derogate from the truth of their power herein; for in some ancient times it was so ordered, that presbyters could perform the sacred ministrations without their bishop. They might not baptize (as hath been observed) without the bishops command; but that limitation respected only the exercise of the power, but not the power in it self.

3. Presbyters have power of ordaining, *Acts* 13. 1, 2, 3. The Church of *Antioch* had not many Prelates at that time, if any; but the prophets and teachers there are mentioned as Ordainers. Whereas some say they were bishops of many Churches in *Syria*; they speak without proof, and against the text, which saith, there were in the church that was at *Antioch*, certain prophets and teachers, &c. which clearly expresseth, that they all belonged to that Church: this right of presbyters is confirmed by the passages before cited, concerning the ordaining and making the bishops of *Alexandria* by the presbyters of that Church. *Firmilian* in *Cyprian*, Ep. 75. saith of them that Rule in the Church, that they have the power of baptizing, of laying on of hands, and ordaining; and who they be, he exprest a little before, viz. Seniors and *Præpositi*, by which the presbyters as well as the bishops are understood. *Felicesimus* was ordained a deacon by *Novatus*, one of *Cyprians* presbyters, schismatically; yet his ordination was not nulled by *Cyprian*, but he was deposed for mal-administration. The first Council of *Nice* in their Epistle to the Church of *Alexandria*, and all the Churches of *Egypt*, *Libia*, and *Pentapolis*, thus determine concerning the presbyters ordained by *Meletius* [ *Socrat. l. 1. c. 6.* ] Let those that by the grace of God, and helped by our prayers, are found to have turned aside to no schism, but have contained themselves within the bounds of the Catholick and Apostolick Church, free from spot of error, have authority of ordaining Ministers, and also of nominating those that are worthy of the Clergy, &c. Now tho' they had not this power granted them to be exercised apart without their bishop; yet it is to be noted, that they had the power, tho the Bishop as president guided in all those acts. The Author of the Comment on the *Ephesians*, that goes under the name of *Ambrose*, saith, That in *Egypt* the presbyters ordain (*consignant*) if the bishop be not present. Also *Austin* saith, that in *Alexandria* and all *Egypt*, if the bishop



bishop be wanting, the presbyters consecrate. Presbyters sent bishops into *England*, and ordained bishops for *England*. *Bede's Hist.* l. 3. c. 4, 5. The Abbot and other presbyters of the Island *Hye*, sent *Aydan*, &c. at King *Oswald's* Request; and this was the ordinary custom; tho in respect of the custom of the Empire, it is said to be unusual. That presbyters may ordain, see *Anselm* on 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. also *Bucer Script. Anglic.* p. 254, 255, 259, 291. The *Lollards* and *Wickliefists* in *England*, held and practised ordination by meer presbyters, *Walsingham Hist. Ang. An.* 1389. so did the *Lutheran* protestants. *Bugenbadius Pomeranus*, a presbyter of *Wittenberg*, ordained the Protestant bishops of *Denmark* in the presence of the King and Senate, in the chief Church at *Hafnia*. See *Melchior Adam* in the Life of *Bugenbadius*, and *Chytrius Saxo's* Chronicle; l. 14, 15, 16, 17. *Forbes* in his *Irenicum* l. 2. c. 11. saith, that presbyters have a share with bishops in the imposition of hands, not only as consenting to the ordination, but as ordainers with the bishop by a power received from the Lord, and as praying for grace to be confer'd on the persons ordained by them and the bishop. That the Ancients did argue from the power of baptizing, to the power of ordaining, is evident out of the *Master*, lib. 4. distinct. 25.

4. Presbyters with Bishops laid on hands for Restoring the excommunicate, and blessing the people, *Cyprian. Epist.* 12. Nor can any return to communion, unless hands be laid upon him by the Bishop and Clergy. *Vid.* also *Ep.* 9. & 46. *Id.* l. 3. *Ep.* 14. *Erasm. Edit.* To the presbyters and deacons, against some presbyters who had given the peace of the Church rashly to some of the lapsed, with the knowledg of the Bishop. In lesser offences, sinners after a just time of penance and confession, receive Right of Communication by the imposition of hands of the Bishop and Clergy. *Clemens Alexandrin. padag.* p. 248. speaking against women wearing other hair than their own, saith, *On whom doth the presbyter lay hands? whom doth he bless? Not on the woman adorn'd, but on anothers Hair, and thereby on anothers Head.*

§ 8. Testimonies in reference to the Bishops Plea of  
being the Apostles Successors.

**F**OR the diversity of order between a bishop and a presbyter, it is alledged, That bishops are the Apostles successors, which presbyters are not. To this it is answered.

1. The ancient Fathers make presbyters as well as bishops, the successors of the Apostles. *Irenaeus* lib. 4. c. 43, 44. 'We must obey the presbyters that are in the Church, even those that have succession from the Apostles, who have received the certain gift of truth according to the pleasure of the Father, with the succession of Episcopacy. Here presbyters are said to have succession from the Apostles, and to have succession of Episcopacy. This cannot be evaded by saying, he intended it only of presbyters of a superior order, which are bishops: for this is to beg the question; and in this Father there is no footsteps of any order of presbyters but what are bishops. *Cyprian* l. 3. Ep. 9. The Deacons must remember, that the Lord chose Apostles, that is, bishops and *Presbyters*; but after the ascension of the Lord, the Apostles made deacons to themselves, as Ministers of their Episcopacy and the Church. Now in the names of Bishops and *Presbyters*, the presbyters are included (as I have before made manifest). And it is plain that in this place, all in the sacred Ministry above Deacons, are included in those names, and called Apostles. *Jerome* in his Epistle to *Heliador*, speaks in general, that Clericks are said to succeed the Apostolical degree. The late form of Ordination in the Church of England, viz. 'Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser, &c. is for the former part, the very form of words used by our Saviour to his Apostles, to express their Pastoral Authority: and fully proves, that the office of a presbyter is Pastoral, and of the same nature with that which was ordinary in the Apostles, and in which they had successors.

2. Some conceive there is no proper succession to the Apostles, whole office, as to its formal state, and specifick difference, was extraordinary, and expired with their persons. And in proper speaking, the ordinary Bishops or Elders cannot be reckoned the successors

successors of the Apostles, for they were contemporary with them in the first planting of the Churches, and did by divine right receive and exercise their governing power, which the Apostles did not supercede by their presence, tho it were under the regulation of their supereminent authority; and the Bishops or Elders of all succeeding ages, are properly the successors of those first bishops. *Bellarmino l. 4. de Pontif. c. 23.* saith, That bishops do not properly succeed the Apostles, because the Apostles being not ordinary, but extraordinary Pastors, have no successors; and that the Pope of *Rome* properly succeeds *Peter*, not as an Apostle, but as an ordinary pastor of the whole church.

3. Whereas some say, That the Order of bishops began in the Apostles, and the order of presbyters in the seventy disciples: it is answered, 1. As concerning the bishops order, when the Fathers speak of Apostles or Evangelists long residing in one church, they did by way of similitude call them bishops thereof. *Reynolds* against *Hart*, saith, That the Fathers when they term an Apostle the bishop of this or that City, mean in a general way, that he did attend that Church for the time, and supply that room in preaching which the bishop afterwards did. And not only the Apostles, but itinerant Ministers or Evangelists, were in such a general sense bishops of the places where they came. *Paul* staid at or about *Ephesus* three years, *Acts* 20. 31. yet he was not bishop there in the strict and proper sense of the word. *James* was either no bishop of *Jerusalem*, or no Apostle, but as many think, another *James*. 2. As concerning the order of inferior presbyters, said to be instituted in the seventy disciples, it is spoken without proof, and against Reason. *Spalatensis* saith, those seventy had but a temporary commission, and therefore that he cannot affirm that Presbyterial Order was directly and immediately instituted in them, *de Rep. Eccles. l. 2. c. 3. n. 4.* *Saravia* acknowledgeth, that the seventy disciples were Evangelists, *de Ministr. Evang. grad. c. 4.*

### § 9. Testimonies concerning the Episcopacy of Timothy and Titus.

1. **T**imothy was not a fixed bishop. His travels we find upon sacred Record. When *Paul* went from *Beran* to *Athens*, he left

test *Silas* and *Timothy* behind him, *Acts* 17. 14. Afterwards they coming to *Paul* at *Athens*, *Paul* sent *Timothy* thence to *Thessalonica*, to confirm the Christians there, *1 Thes.* 3. 6. *An. C.* 47. Thence he returned to *Athens* again, and *Paul* sent him and *Silas* thence into *Macedonia*, *Acts* 18. 5. and thence they returned to *Paul* at *Corinth*, *An.* 48. Afterwards they travel to *Ephesus*, whence *Paul* sent *Timothy* and *Erastus* into *Macedonia*, *Acts* 19. 22. whither *Paul* went after them; *An.* 51. from *Macedonia* they with divers brethren journeyed into *Asia*, *Acts* 20. 4. and come to *Miletum*, where *Paul* sent to *Ephesus* to call the elders of the Church, *An.* 53. Then *Paul* did not leave *Timothy* as Bishop of *Ephesus*, but took him with him in his journey to *Jerusalem*, and so to *Rome*: for those Epistles which *Paul* wrote while he was prisoner at *Rome*, bear either in their inscription, or some other passage, the name of *Timothy*, as *Pauls* companion, viz. the Epistles to the *Ephesians*, to the *Philippians*, to the *Colossians*, to the *Hebrews* and to *Philemon*. *Pauls* beseeching of *Timothy*, to abide still at *Ephesus*, when he went into *Macedonia*, *2 Tim.* 1. 3. had been needless, if he were then a settled bishop there. Besides, it is granted, that *Timothy* was not bishop of *Ephesus*, when he was with *Paul* at *Miletum*; yet that Church had then elders, which the Holy Ghost had made Bishops. Therefore it cannot be, that *Timothy* was the first Bishop that ever *Ephesus* had, which nevertheless is affirmed in the Postscript of the second epistle to *Timothy*. *Spalatensis*, lib. 2 c. 3. n. 60. saith, That without doubt *Timothy* was a General bishop, that is, an Apostle tyed to no seat.

2. *Titus* was no fixed Bishop. His travels we likewise find upon sacred record. *Paul* made him his companion in his journey to *Jerusalem*, *Gal.* 2. 1. *An.* 43, 45. *Paul* returning to *Antioch*, passed through *Syria* and *Cilicia*, confirming the Churches, *Acts* 15. 41. from *Cilicia* he passed to *Creet*, where having preached the Gospel, and planted a Church, he left *Titus* for a while to set in order the things that were left undone, *Tit.* 1. 5. *An.* 46. *Paul* joins *Titus* to come to him to *Nicopolis*, where he intended to Winter, *Tit.* 3. 12. *An.* 51. but changing his purpose, he sent for him to *Ephesus*, where his Winter-station was, *2 Cor.* 1. 8. thence he sent him to *Corinth*, to enquire of the state of that Church. His return from thence, *Paul* expected at *Tyrras*; and because there he found not his expectation answered, he was grieved.

ved in spirit, 2 Cor. 2. 12. Thence *Paul* passed into *Macedonia*, where *Titus* met him, and brought him the glad tidings of the gracious effect which his first *Epistle* had wrought among the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 7. 5, &c. an. 52. *Paul* having collected the liberality of the Saints, sends *Titus*, an. 53. again to the *Corinthians*, to prepare them for that contribution, 2 Cor. 8. 6. And we do not find, that after his first removal from *Crete*, he did ever return thither. After this we read, that *Titus* was with *Paul* at *Rome*, and went thence not to *Crete*, but to *Dalmatia*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. It is to be noted, that after the time of *Titus* his being in *Crete*, was the greatest part of his travels. And if *Titus* did abide some years in *Crete*, that doth not declare him to be a fixed bishop there; for unfixed Ministers were not so obliged to perpetual motion, but that they resided long in one place, according to the work to be done there, as *Paul* abode three years at *Ephesus*.

3. Of *Timothy* and *Titus* jointly, these following things may be observed: In the New Testament there is no instance of a settled Overseer or Pastor, whose motion was so planetary as theirs; and there is no evidence that afterwards they return'd to reside at *Ephesus* or *Crete*: It is granted by the assertors of their supposed *Episcopacy*, that they were not bishops till after *Paul's* first being at *Rome*. Now the first *Epistle* to *Timothy*, and the *Epistle* to *Titus*, were written by *Paul* before his first going to *Rome*; and his second *Epistle* to *Timothy* was written at his first being at *Rome*, Vid. *Ludov. Capellus Histor. Eccles.* p. 66, 74. All that aver *Timothy* and *Titus* to be bishops, borrow their testimony from *Eusebius*; and all that he saith, is only that it is so written; and he had this story from the fabulous *Clement*, and from *Egesippus*, who is not extant. It is observed that *Eusebius*, *Irenaeus*, and others, delivered what they received, too securely.

4. Touching the Postscripts of the *Epistles*, in which they are stiled bishops, whether they be canonical or authentick proof, let it be considered. It cannot be imagined that *Paul* or his Pen-man would underwrite these words, viz. *The first Epistle to Timothy was written, &c.* and *the second Epistle to Timotheus, ordained the first bishop, &c.* Did he know or mind that there would be a second epistle, or bishop? Or did he then intend that the first should be distinguished from the second, by these words of distinction? The first *Epistle* to *Timothy*, *Beza* proves was not written from *Laodicea*, but from *Macedonia*: to which opinion *Baronius* and



*Serrarius* subscribe. And the name of *Phrygia Pacatiana* was not in use in *Paul's* time, nor till the more declining time of the *Roman Empire*. In the postscript of the second *Epistle* to *Timothy*, these words, *ordained first bishop*, &c. is not in many ancient Copies, saith *Beza*, nor in the Vulgar edition, nor in the *Syriack Interpreter*. The *Epistle* to *Titus* was not written from *Nicopolis*, as the postscript saith; for had *Paul* been there, he would have said, I have determined *here*, not *there* to winter. And whereas it saith *the first bishop*, did *Paul* or his *Penman* mind the notifying of a succeeding bishop, and the distinguishing of *Titus* from him in this *Epistle*? Moreover bishop of the Church of the *Cretians*, is not the stile of a bishop of a Diocels, who hath some City, and not a whole Region for his See. *Creet* is said to have had a hundred Cities in it, and *Titus* was directed by *Paul* to ordain elders or bishops in all those Cities that had Christians. And the Scripture way of expression would be, not the Church, but the Churches of the *cretians*; (Church) being used of a City with its adjacent Villages; and (Churches) of a Region or Countrey of such a circuit as *Creet* was. Thus there is good ground to think, that the postscripts are of much later date than the *Epistles* themselves.

5. The precepts given by *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, are either such as concern all presbyters, or such as are above the bishop of a particular church. 1. Some precepts given them, concern all presbyters. To be instant in season and out of season, belongs to all preachers of the Gospel. As a bishop must be able to convince gainsayers, so ought all presbyters. The stopping of the mouths of subverters, is by conviction, and extends as well to doctrine, as to definitive sentencing, *Mat. 22. 34.* and even definitive silencing was anciently by presbyters, either alone, or in conjunction with their bishops. The authority given to *Timothy*, That those who sin, be rebuked before all, belongs to presbyters, and it is that which may be done by equals. To lay hands suddenly on no man, concerns presbyters, to whom belongs the power of laying on of hands. Nor doth this precept infer, That a bishop hath power to ordain alone; and it is granted that one bishop alone may not ordain a bishop. Presbyters as well as bishops were concern'd in that precept, of not receiving an accusation suddenly against any. And in ancient times, if a bishop or presbyter were accused, the matter was referred to a Synod consisting of



of bishops and presbyters. Other precepts given them, were above the proper work of a bishop of a particular Church. To erect and govern Churches in a hundred Cities, and to govern such presbyters, who, according to Dr. *Hammond*, were bishops, belonged not to an ordinary bishop of a particular Church. Wherefore this latter sort of duties belonged to *Timothy* and *Titus* as Evangelists, or General Ministers, who had a kind of Vice-Apostolick office; of which sort were *Barnabas*, *Silas*, *Apollos*, *Titus*, *Timothy*, and *Epaphroditus*, and others.

*Ambrose* on *Eph.* 4. saith, they are stiled Evangelists who did *Evangelizare sine Cathedra*.

It often happened, that those unfixed Officers resided for a longer time in some places, and then they managed the affairs of those Churches in chief, during the time of their residence.

§ 10. Concerning the Angels of the Seven Churches.  
in A S I A.

**I**T is much insisted on, that these Angels were bishops of a superior Order to that of presbyters. Whereupon let it be considered, 1. That the title of Stars and Angels, are not proper, but figurative and mystical names, made use of in a mystical book; and that the said names are common to all ministers. *Gregory the Great*, l. 34. *Mor.* on *Joh* c. 4. saith, that these Angels are the preachers of the Churches. 2. That the name Angel may be taken collectively, not individually. *Austins* Homily on the *Apoc.* on these words, *I will remove thy Candlestick*, saith, that *Joh* calls the Church the Angel. As the Civil state of the *Pagano-Christian* Empire is called the Beast, and the Ecclesiastical state, the Whore; so Angel may signify the whole Presbytery, but put in the singular number, to hold proportion to the seven stars, which signify the same thing, and the seven Candlesticks. In these Epistles to the Churches, there are indications, that not a single person, but a company is represented under this name, *Rev.* 2. 10, 16, 24, 25. 3. *Beza* saith, that this Angel was only *preses*. Indeed he to whom the title of bishop was appropriated by the ancient Fathers, was the President of the presbytery. *Ambrose* on *1 Tim.* c. 3. saith, He is the bishop who is first among the presbyters. This priority or presidency is in History observed to have begun

begun first at *Alexandria*, the people whereof above other men were given to schism and sedition, as *Socrates* saith of them, *1. 7. c. 13.* *If this presidency began at Alexandria upon the death of Mark, it must needs be long before the death of John the Apostle.* Howbeit, *Clement* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, takes no notice of such a priority or presidency of one above the rest in that Church. And *Jerome* having mentioned *John* as the last of the Apostles, saith that afterwards one was set over the rest. Now whereas *Jerome* called the imparity of bishops and presbyters, an Apostolical tradition, it is to be noted that with him an Apostolical tradition, and Ecclesiastical custome, are the same.

But the main thing still remains unproved, for ought that is to be gathered from this title of Angel, or from any thing contained in these Epistles to the *Asian Churches*, namely, that these Angels ( whatsoever they might be ) were bishops of a superior order than that of presbyters, or that they had a superiority of jurisdiction over the presbyters, or that they were bishops set over divers settled Churches, or fixed Congregations, with their Pastors, or that they had the sole power of jurisdiction and ordination. The main point in controversie is not, Whether bishops, but whether such as the present Diocesan bishops, have continued from the Apostles times to this Age.

The ancient bishop was the Officer of a particular Church, not a general Officer of many Churches. He was not a bishop of bishops; that is, he did not assume a power of ruling bishops who have their proper stated Churches. *Cyrian Conc. Carth.* saith, *None of us calls himself, or makes himself to be a bishop of bishops, or by tyrannical terror drives his Colleagues to a necessity of obeying.* The ancient bishop did not govern alone, but in conjunction with the presbyters of his Church; He did not, and might not ordain without the Counsel of his Clergy. *Ignatius* in his Epistle to the *Trall.* saith, *What is the presbytery, but the sacred Assembly of the Councellors and Confessors of the bishops?* *Cyrian* in his epistle to *Cornelius*, wisheth him to read his Letters to the flourishing Clergy at *Rome*, that did preside with him. *Id. l. 3. Ep. 14. Erasmi. Edit.* From the beginning of my *Episcopacy* I resolved to do nothing without your counsel, and without the consent of my people. 4. *Conc. Carthagi. 23.* The sentence of a bishop shall be void without the presence of his Clericks. *Council. Carthag. c. 22.* Let not a bishop ordain Clericks without a Council of his Clericks,

## *The Present Ecclesiastical Government, compared with the Ancient EPIS- COPACY.*

**I**T is commonly objected against the Nonconformists, That they are enemies to *Episcopacy*, and that they renounce the Ancient Government received in all the Churches. The truth of this Objection may easily be believed by those that hear of *Episcopal Government*, and consider only the name thereof, which hath continued the same till now, but not the thing signified by that name, which is so changed, that it is of another nature and kind from what was in the first Ages. There be Nonconformists, who think they are more for the Ancient *Episcopacy*, than the Assertors of the present Hierarchy are; and who believe they are able to make it evident, may they be permitted. Something to this purpose is here in a short Scheme tendered to consideration, and proof is ready to be made of each particular here asserted, touching the state and practice of the Ancient Church.

1. **I**N the first ages, a Political Church constituted as well for Government and Discipline, as for Divine Worship, was one particular Society of Christians, having its proper and immediate bishop or bishops, pastor or pastors. In these times the lowest political Church, is a Diocese usually consisting of many hundred parishes, having, according to the Hierarchical principle, no bishop but the Diocesan. Yet these parishes being stated ecclesiastical Societies, having their proper pastors, are really so many particular Churches.

2. In the first Ages, the bishops were bishops of one stated Ecclesiastical Society, or particular Church. But in the present age,  
bishops

bishops that are of the lowest rank, according to the Hierarchical principle, are bishops of many hundred churches, which kind of bishop the ancient churches did not know, and which differs as much from the ancient bishop, as the General of an Army from the Captain of a single Company.

3. The bishop of the first Ages was a bishop over his own Church; but he was not a bishop of bishops; that is, he was not a Ruler of the Pastors of other Churches. But the present bishop, even of the lowest rank, according to the Hierarchical principle, is a bishop of bishops, namely, of the presbyters of his Diocese, who are the proper and immediate Pastors of their several Churches, and really bishops according to the true import of that name and office, as it is in Scripture.

4. The Presbyters of the Church of *England*, if they be not bishops, are not of the same order with the presbyters mentioned in Scripture; for all presbyters therein mentioned, were bishops truly and properly so called. Now if they be not of the same order with the Scripture-presbyters, they are not of divine, but merely humane institution: but if it be acknowledged that they are of the same order, (as indeed they are) why are they denied to be bishops of their respective Charges? And why are they bereaved of the *Episcopal* or pastoral Authority therein?

5. The bishops of the first Ages had no greater number of souls under their *Episcopacy*, than of which they could take the personal oversight. But the present bishops have commonly more souls under their *Episcopacy*, than a hundred bishops can personally watch over. The ordinary work of the ancient bishop, was to preach, give thanks, administer the *Eucharist*, pronounce the blessing, and exercise discipline to the people under his charge. But the bishops of the present age, neither do nor can perform these ministries to the people that are under their charge.

6. The ancient bishop did exercise his *Episcopacy* personally, and not by Delegates or Substitutes. But the present bishop doth for the most part exercise it not personally, but either by his Delegates, who have no *Episcopal* authority of themselves, but what they derive from him alone; or by Substitutes, whom he accounts no bishops.

7. The ancient bishops did not govern alone, but in conjunction with the presbyters of his Church, he being the first presbyter, and styled the Brother and Colleague of the presbyters. But the

the present bishop hath in himself alone the power of jurisdiction both over the Clergy and Laity.

8. The ancient bishop did not, and might not ordain Ministers without the counsel of his Clergy. But the present bishop hath the sole power of ordination. Tho some presbyters whom he shall think fit, join with him in laying on of hands, yet he alone hath the whole power of the act without their consent or counsel.

9. To labour in the word and doctrine, was anciently the most honourable part of the bishops work, and it was constantly performed by him in his particular Church or Congregation. But now preaching is not reckoned to be the ordinary work of a bishop, and many bishops preach but rarely and extraordinarily.

10. The ancient bishops were chosen by all the people, at least not without their consent, over whom they were to preside. And when a bishop was to be ordained, it was the ordinary course of the first ages, for all the next bishops to assemble with the people for whom he was to be ordained, and every one was acquainted with his conversation. But the present bishops entrance into his office, is by a far different way.

11. Anciently there was a bishop with his Church in every City which had a competent number of Christians. But in the later times many, yea most Cities have not their proper bishops (I mean bishops in the Hierarchical sense) tho they be as large and populous as those that have. It is to be noted, that the manner was not anciently as now, that a Church and its bishop did cause that to be called a City, which otherwise would not be so called; but any Town corporate or Burrough was ~~was~~ a City, according to the ancient use of the word.

12. Because in the first ages the Christians of a City, and its adjacent Villages, did ordinarily make up but one competent Congregation; There was commonly but one Church in a City, and that City-church took in all the Christians of the adjacent Villages, who were but one stated Society, all the members whereof might have personal communion one with another. But the dividing of the bishops Cure into such parts as are now called Parishes, came not in till long after the Apostles times, and when that division first took place, they were but as Chappels of Ease to the City-church. Here it is to be noted, That till *Constantine's* time it cannot be proved that there were above four or five Churches in all the world that consisted of more people than



one, or two, parishes, nor of half somany as *Episcopis* then.

13. In the beginning of Christianity, Cities or Towns were judged the fittest places for the constituting of Churches, because in them the materials of a Church, to wit, believers, were most numerous, and in them was the greatest opportunity of making over Converts, with other advantages which the Villages did not afford. Yet when the number of Christians increased in the Regions Churches, having their proper Bishops, were constituted in Villages, for places that were not Cities. A good proof whereof is in the *Chenepiscopi*, who were bishops distinct from ordinary presbyters. Thus it was in the first ages. But in the following times, when the worldly grandure of *Episcopacy* was rising, they chose to make that bishops might not be ordained in Villages or small Cities, lest the name and authority of a bishop should be contemptible.

14. Tho it hath been decreed by Councils, That there be but one bishop in a city, and the custom hath generally prevailed; yet that is manifest proof, that in the first ages more bishops than one were allowed at once in the same city, yea in the same church. Indeed the Ecclesiastical Historians now extant, being comparatively but of later ages, and having respect to the government of their own times, set down the succession of the ancient bishops by single persons; whereas several bishops presiding at the same time, the surviving and most noted Colleague was reckoned the Successor.

15. The ancient bishops exercised discipline in a spiritual manner by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and by arguments deduced from it, sought to convince the judgment, and tye the conscience, according to the true nature of Ecclesiastical discipline. But the present bishops have their Courts, which are managed like Secular Courts, to compel men to an outward observance of their decrees, by the dread of temporal penalties annexed to excommunication.

16. The present bishops say of their Church-government, that without secular force none would regard it. But the ancient bishops thought it a reproach to Christs discipline to declare to the world, that in a powerful thing of it self, and insufficient to obtain obedience, unless the temporal sword enforce it.

17. The Episcopal or Pastoral authority is now commonly exercised by a Lay chancery, and the an ordinary priest be pre-



sent in the Court to speak the words of excommunication, yet the Chapcellor or Judge decrees it. And excommunications and absolutions, not in the bishops name and authority, when he never had the hearing of the cause: but anciently it was not so. In this case I enquire, Whether Christ hath authorised any bishop to delegate his Episcopal power to a Lay-man, yea, or to a Clergy-man, if that Clergy-man be not as Christs commissioned Officer, authorized to exert that power?

18. The sentence of excommunication is denounced for any non-observance of the judgment of the Court, tho in cases of doubtful right, and in the smallest matters. But no proof of such practice can be produced from the first ages. And let the bishops themselves judg: howsoever contempt may be pretended in the case. Whether many who are usually so sentenced either upon doubtful or trivial matters, do indeed deserve to be adjudged to such a state as that sentence duly administred doth import?

19. The Parish-Minister is bound to denounce in his Church the sentence of Excommunication decreed by the Court, tho he have no cognizance of the cause, and tho he know the sentence to be unjust. But no such practice was known in the ancient church.

20. Ministers at their Ordination receive that Office which essentially includes an Authority and Obligation to teach their flocks; yet they may not preach without a license from the bishop in their own proper charges or cures, tho they perform other Offices of the Ministry. But anciently it was not so.

21. The present bishops require of their Clergy an Oath of Canonical obedience, but let any proof be given that the ancient bishops did ever impose such an Oath, or that the presbyters ever took it.

22. The Parish-minister hath not the liberty of examining whether the Infant brought to Baptism be a capable subject thereof; that is, Whether he be the child of a Christian or Infidel; but he must baptize the child of every one that is presented by Godfathers and Godmothers, who commonly have little or no interest in the Infant, nor care of its education, and who not seldom are but Boys and Girls.

23. Confirmation is to be administred only by the bishop; and yet it is in an ordinary way impossible for him to examine all persons to be confirmed by him within his Diocess. Consequently it cannot be duly administred to multitudes of persons that are to

be presented thereunto; and they that are confirmed, are few in comparison of those that are not. But the ancient bishops being bishops of one particular Church, were capable of taking the oversight of every particular person of their flocks, and did personally perform the same.

24. A great part of the adult members of Parish-churches, are such as understand not what Christianity is; but the ancient churches were careful that all their members might be competently knowing in the Religion which they professed; as appears by their discipline towards the *Catechumens*, and the long time before they admitted them to baptism.

25. The Parish-ministers have no remedy, but to give the Sacrament to ignorant and scandalous persons that offer themselves thereunto; they can but accuse the openly wicked in the Chancellors Court, and but for one time deny the Sacrament to some kind of notorious sinners; but then they are bound to prosecute them in the Court, and to procure a sentence against them there, where not one notorious sinner of a multitude is or can be brought to a due trial, in regard of the way of proceeding in Ecclesiastical Courts, and the multitude of souls in every Diocese. The consequent hereof is the general intrusion of the grossly ignorant and profane, who pollute the communion of the Church, and eat and drink damnation to themselves.

26. All parishioners that are of age, are compelled to receive the Sacrament, how unfit or unwilling soever they be, by the terrors of penalties subsequent to excommunication; and those that have been excommunicated for refusing to receive, are absolved from that sentence, if being driven thereunto they will receive the Sacrament rather than lye in Gaol. And the Parish-ministers are compelled to give the Sacrament to such.

27. Many Orthodox, Learned; and Piousmen, duly qualified for the Ministry, are cast and kept out of it for not declaring an unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in the Liturgy and Book of Ordination. Let any proof be given that ever any of the ancient Bishops or Churches thought all the points contained in those books so necessary to be assented and consented to, or that any of them so severely required the like conformity to opinions, forms and ceremonies of the like nature and reason.

28. The present bishops debar all Christians from the Lords Supper who through unfeigned scruple of conscience refuse to kneel in the act of receiving the Sacramental bread and wine; and they debar from baptism the children of those Parents who judge it unlawful for them to permit the signing of their children with the sign of the Cross. But the ancient bishops did not so, nor doth the practice of Antiquity warrant the same.

29. The greatest severity of the present Church-discipline, is directed against Ministers and people who observe not full conformity to the Rules, Forms, Rights, and Ceremonies prescribed in the Liturgy and Canons. But the ancient bishops exercised it against those who subverted the Christian faith by damnable Heresies, or enormously transgressed the Rules of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, prescribed of God in his word.

30. The Oath imposed upon the Church-wardens to make their Presentments according to the Book of Articles framed by the bishop, hath had this consequence ( which ought to be laid to heart ) that commonly they would rather overlook their Oath, than become accusers of their honest neighbours; not only those who withdraw from, but those who hold communion with the Parish churches.

31. The requiring of the reordination of those ministers, who have been ordained by presbyters, is contrary to the practice of the ancient Church; it contradicts the judgments of many Eminent bishops, and other Divines of the Church of *England*, who have maintained the validity of Presbyterian ordination; it nullifies the ministry of all the Foreign Reformed Churches, and of most, if not of all the *Lutheran* churches; and it advances the Church of *Rome* above them; for the priests of the Church of *Rome* upon their conversion are received without reordination: whereas those that come from the Foreign Reformed churches, must be reordained before they be admitted to the ministry in the church of *England*. And all this is done, when in Scripture the office of a bishop and presbyter is one and the same, and the difference between them came in afterwards by Ecclesiastical customs.

It is commonly said, That Churches and Bishops being now delivered from their ancient low and distressed state under the tyranny and persecution of the Heathen powers, and enjoying the patron-

patronage and bounty of Christian Rulers, should not be confined to their ancient meanness, narrowness and weakness, but be enlarged in opulency, amplitude, and potency, answerable to the Civil State.

*Ans.* It is freely granted, that the state Ecclesiastical should in reasonable proportion partake of the prosperity of the Civil state. But the question still remains.

1. Whether for the increase of the wealth, power and splendor of bishops, and other chief Clergy-men, or for any political considerations, the essential form of a bishops church constituted by the Apostles, who were immediately commissioned from Christ, should be changed from a single Congregation or Society, of which the bishop took the personal oversight, to a diocese consisting of many, yea commonly of many hundred stated congregations, having each of them their proper presbyter, and all of them but one bishop, to whom it is impossible to take the personal oversight of the souls therein, and to perform towards them all the duties which were the ordinary work of the ancient bishop.

2. Whether the office of a bishop or elder of one single church, instituted by the Holy Ghost, should be changed into another essentially different office, viz. of a bishop of many, yea many hundred single churches, each whereof have their proper pastors or presbyters, who according to the Scripture are the same with bishops?

3. Whether the office of presbyter or elder of divine institution, who according to the Scripture is truly and properly a bishop, should be changed into an office essentially different, viz. of a presbyter who is no bishop, but only the bishops subject, substitute, or Curate? And whether the said office should be statedly bereaved of the power of discipline, which is essential to it?

4. Whether the office of a bishop, which is a trust given by Christ to be personally discharged by him that receives it, should be executed by delegation to a Lay-man, yea or to a Clergy-man who is held to be no bishop?

5. Whether the ancient government of the Church by a bishop in conjunction with his presbyters, should be changed into a government by the bishop alone, and by his Chancellor and Officials, whose authority is derived from him?

Concessions concerning Episcopacy.

**H**old it lawful and expedient, that the elders or pastors of a particular Church should stately defer to one that is ablest among them, a guiding power over them in ordination and discipline, and other church-affairs.

I hold it not unfit that this person should for distinctions sake have the title of bishop given him, tho he be not of an essentially different order from the rest of the pastors, but only of a superior degree in the same holy Order.

churches. And from this I dissent not.



## *A Consideration of the present state of Conformity in the Church of England.*

**I**N considering the terms of Conformity now enjoined, I am not forgetful of the reverence due to Rulers. I do not herein presume to judge their publick acts, but I only exercise a judgment of discretion about my own act in reference to their injunctions, which surely they will not disallow. To consider the lawfulness of those things, of which an unfeigned approbation is required, is an unquestionable duty. If I should profess what I believe not, or practice what I allow not, my sin were heinous and inexcusable. The Reasons of my dissent are here expressed as inoffensively as can be done by me, who am to shew, that it is not nothing for which I have quitted the station which I formerly held in the Church. I have no reason nor will to lay a heavier yoke upon my self than the Law doth, or to set such bars in my own way as the Law doth not. I therefore admit that more restrained sense of the Declaration which is thought by many to make the enjoined terms more easie. I am concerned to take notice of smaller as well as greater matters, because as well the one as the other are alike to be owned. Tho I would not differ with the Church about little things, yet I may not profess an allowance of any little thing, which I believe is not allowable. I desire to proceed in this enquiry with good judgment, and to do nothing weakly; but however it be, I had rather be thought to be injudicious and overscrupulous in making objections, than want a sufficient clearness in a business of this nature. I take no pleasure in making objections against the book of Common prayer, but I do it by constraint, that I may give an account of that Nonconformity to which by an irresistible force of Conscience I am necessitated. If all things contained and prescribed in the said book, be right and good, I heartily wish that I and all men were convinced of it. I joyn with the Congregation in the use



use of the Liturgy, and I acknowledg that by joyn'ng in it, I declare my content to the use of it, as in the main an allowable form of Worship. But this doth not (as I suppose) signifie my allowing of all things therein contained.

*Of the Declaration of unfeigned Assent and Consent required by the Act of Uniformity.*

THE true intent of this Declaration is to be considered. By the form of words wherein it is expressed, it seems to signifie no less than assent to, and approbation of the whole, and of every thing contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common-prayer, &c. so that no man can make this Declaration, that is not satisfied of the truth of every thing contained, and the lawfulness and allowableness of every thing prescribed in the said book. Nothing is more evident to me, than that I ought not to dissemble or lye in matters of Religion; but so I do, if I declare my unfeigned assent and consent to those things contained and prescribed in the Liturgy, from which I really dissent.

But this meaning thereof is not acknowledged by many and very judicious persons among the Conformists. They grant indeed, that the words will not only bear this sense, but would seem to incline to it, if the meaning of them were not evidently limited by the Law it self, and that in the very clause wherein it doth impose it. That the Law doth expressly determine this assent to the use of the Liturgy, they say is evident from these words, *He shall declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all things in the said book contained and prescribed, in these words, and no other: I A. B. do here declare, &c.* Now by all rules of interpreting laws, we are directed (say they) to understand what is said more generally in any law, according to the limitation which the law it self gives, especially if it be in express words.

I admit this later and more restrained sense of the Declaration as probable; and in this disquisition I proceed accordingly, taking the declared assent and consent as limited to the use of things. Nevertheless it must necessarily extend to the use of all things contained and prescribed in the Liturgy. And thereupon I judg, that not only all the forms of sacred ministrations, but also all the Rubricks, together with the Calender and Tables, and every part thereof, comes within the compass of this declaration.

As concerning the import of the assent and consent to be given thereunto, I take it unquestionably to signifie, according to the genuine sense of the words, our approbation or allowance of the use of all things as aforesaid, and not merely to bind us for peace sake not to oppose them. Wherefore if the use of any one thing great or small therein comprehended, be not allowable, there is just ground of refusing this declaration.

Assent and consent to the use of all things, supposeth that all are lawful; it supposeth also, that all things are so far fit to be used, as to have no such evil consequence as may justly forbid their use: it supposeth also, that the whole and every part of this book is so far true, as to have no errors which doth entrench upon the Christian Faith, or hath bad influence on mens lives.

I think I may comply for charity and peace sake, in the use of indifferent things of no hurtful tendency, tho they be unuseful or unprofitable; yet I query whether I may declare my unfeigned assent and consent to the use of those unuseful or unprofitable things, or to the using of them instead of things useful and profitable.

I think some little errors and untruths of inconsiderable consequence, such as little mis translations or misapplications of Scripture-phrase, may be tolerated in the service of God; yet I query whether I may declare such assent and consent to all and every thing, as doth express a justifying of those little errors and untruths, or an allowing of the retained use of them. My bare using of them, necessarily signifies no more than that I judg them to be tolerable; but my declaring consent to the required use of them, signifies that I judg them to be allowable.

I think I may joyn in a prayer, as it is sound and good for the substance, tho it hath some little error doctrinal or historical couched in it; yet I query whether I may personally use or consent to the use of such error.

I query whether I may declare unfeigned assent and consent to the use of things in themselves indifferent, if I heartily wish they were not used in regard of inconveniences or offences arising from them.

I query also, Whether I may declare my assent and consent to the use of a Rubrick being an injunction, if I disallow the injoining of the thing prescribed in it; and in consenting to a rule or law as such, I consent not only to the doing of the thing prescribed,

bed, but to the prescribing or enjoining thereof.

Forasmuch as I am not sufficiently clear, whether the words *unfeigned assent and consent* do import only an acknowledgment of the things as simply lawful and passable; or besides this, an approbation thereof as laudable and desirable; I do here in some particulars resolve diversly according to the different supposition of the higher or lower meaning of the said words.

*Of the Second Article of Subscription required by the  
Thirty sixth Canon.*

**T**Ho the declaration of assent and consent be restrained to the use of things, yet it doth not appear that the subscription required by the Thirty-sixth Canon is so restrained. For these words thereof, *That the Book of Common prayer, and of ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, contains nothing contrary to the word of God;* seem plainly comprehensive as well of things asserted, as of things to be done or used; and the truth of the one sort seems to be acknowledged, as well as the use of the other sort to be allowed. And to say, That nothing therein is contrary to the word of God, seems to me as much as to say, that all things therein are agreeable to the word of God. The word of God is the Rule by which all things in the Liturgy ought to be regulated. Now for a thing that is under a Rule, to be not contrary to the Rule, is all one as to be agreeable thereunto. Any moral act not contrary to Gods Law, is agreeable to it; and what is not agreeable to it, is contrary to it.

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Here followeth a Consideration of divers particulars contained in the Liturgy.

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*Of the Order how the Holy Scripture is appointed to be read.*

**I** Do not think it in it self unlawful, or utterly unfit, that some Apocryphal Chapters should be read in the Church. But I question whether I may consent to the use of the Calendar and Tables so far as they direct to the reading of Apocryphal Chap-

ters in the same place, and under the same title with Canonical Chapters ; also to the reading of the proper lessons, tho apocryphal, rather than the lessons in the ordinary course, tho canonical. I grant that the Church in her Articles of Religion, doth sufficiently distinguish between the Canonical and Apocryphal Books ; nevertheless the aforesaid use of the Apocryphal Chapters. in the liturgy, without any distinction of the Canonical there given, may tempt the Vulgar to take them for Gods word. It is to be noted, that in the order of reading the lessons, the title of holy Scripture, and Old Testament, is given to the Apocrypha.

I am more concerned to know whether there be no sufficient objection against the matter of any of the Apocryphal Chapters appointed to be read, which may prove them not fit to be used in Divine service.

*Judith* c. 9. approveth the fact of *Simeon* against the *Sichemites*, as performed by divine assistance and approbation, and desires the like assistance in her enterprize. Chap. 10. and C. 11. she speaks things untrue. In defence of the prescribed use of these Chapters, it is said, that these things are related historically, and not for imitation, as many things are in the Canonical Scripture : Such as were *Elijah's* intercession against *Israel*, and both his and *Jonah's* passionate desire of death. But this doth not satisfie ; for those unwarrantable passages which in Canonical Scripture are related historically, are sufficiently signified to be unwarrantable, as in particular those speeches of *Elijah* and *Jonah* are plainly notified to be their weaknesses. But the aforesaid passages in *Judith* seem to be recorded in way of approbation, being deliberate in a solemn prayer for success in an enterprize ; and she expressly prays for success in her deceit ; and nothing of the disallowance of these things is intimated in that story. I ask, Whether the reading hereof as a holy lesson, doth attend to the imboldning of men in such undertakings ; and at least whether it hath not the appearance of evil, from which we ought to abstain, by the Apostles precept?

I might further object, That there is little evidence of the Historical truth of this Book. But on this I insist not.

*Tob. 5. 12.* The Angel *Raphael* is brought in telling a falsehood in express terms, viz. that he was *Azarias* the son of *Ananias* the great, of *Tobias* brethren. Tho this fifth chapter be left out of the Calendar, yet in other chapters appointed to be read, this person

person who speaks that which was untrue, is set forth for a holy Angel. And c. 7. 3. both the Angel and *Tobias* are reported to say to *Raguel*, that which was false on the Angels part, viz. that they were of the sons of *Naphthalim*, who were captives in *Niniveh*. Tho we read in Scripture that Angels were sometimes taken to be men, and so called by them that took them to be such; yet we do not read therein, that any Holy Angels affirmed that they were men, and such particular men by name.

*Tob. 12. 15.* The Angel is reported to say, *I am Raphael, one of the seven holy Angels which present the prayers of the Saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy one.* The presenting of the prayers of the Saints before God, looks like a mediatory act. And suppose it here signifies but an act of ministry, not of mediation; yet I question whether it be right to consent to the use of such a passage as seems to imply the mediation or intercession of Angels for us, and which may give an occasion to believe it, and be made use of to prove that opinion.

The story of *Bel* and the *Dragon* is thought to be fabulous; and there may be some regret in consenting to its being appointed to be read at a time, when it being omitted, the first Chapter of *Isaiah* would come in course to be read. Moreover the reading of the *Apocrypha* hath been excepted against, as it excludeth much of the Canonical Scriptures, and taketh in such Books in their stead, as are commonly reputed fabulous, yet read for real History.

*Of the Tables and Rules for Holy dayes and times.*

**I**N this Book is contained the appointment of divers Festivals, and other solemn times. Now tho I scruple not to join in the publick Worship of God performed in those days, yet I hesitate about the express declaring of assent and consent to the use of Tables and Rules directing to the solemnizing thereof. It is to me doubtful whether any humane power may lawfully institute such times and days as some of these are. I confess there be arguments for the lawfulness of such institution, which I cannot well answer; and there be other arguments against it, which also I cannot well answer; and this later sort I crave leave to propound in this place.

The occasions of these days and times were existent in the Apostles times; and if God would have had these days appointed, he

he could as easily and fitly have done it by his Apostles, and have left it recorded in Scripture, as he did other like things.

If the institution of these days and times were necessary, it is equally necessary in all ages and parts of the Catholick Church, and is the matter of an universal Law, and so belongs to the Universal Lawgiver.

If the Universal Lawgiver hath reserved any thing to his own power, it can be no less than the making of such Laws and Ordinances as are universally and perpetually necessary.

To affirm such institution to be universally necessary, when God hath made no Law concerning it in Scripture, is to overthrow the sufficiency of Scripture, as a Catholick Rule of divine faith and worship. For men to institute Ordinances of Worship supposed to be universally and perpetually necessary to the Church, supposeth a defect in the divine, universal, and perpetual Ordinances, to be made up by adding other Ordinances by way of supplement.

The fourth Commandment being one of the Decalogue, seems to be of so high a nature, that man may not presume to make the like. The Table of all the Feasts to be observed, begins, *All Sundays in the year*: so it calls the *Lords day*, which it seems to put upon the same level with feasts of humane institution. And there seems as great a sacredness (if not greater) conferred upon some of the high festivals, as upon the *Lords day*, which is of divine appointment.

The *Lords day* doth sufficiently answer the ends for which those festivals that relate to our Saviour are appointed: for that being in memory of his Resurrection, implies a memorial of all things done for mans redemption.

If such Institutions as these be not prohibited, *Deut. 4 2. Deut. 12 32.* I enquire of what sort is the prohibited addition there spoken of? The prohibition seems to me to be not meerly of adding to the Rule, to wit, the written law; but of doing more than that Rule required; as the precept is not of preserving the Rule, but observing what is commanded in it. I do not question the lawfulness of such humane institutions in divine Worship as are in meer subordination to divine institution, and serve for the more convenient modifying and ordering thereof, and which indeed are not properly additions thereunto, because they are not of the same nature and use, but are meerly accidentals of worship.

But



But I doubt of such humane Ordinances of divine worship as are coordinate with the divine Ordinances, and expresse the same nature, reason, end and use with them, and are additions properly so called. The festival days appointed by the Church of *England*, are in the Table of feasts set in coordination with the Lords day; and they are not meerly the accidentals, but very important integral parts of divine service in this Church. In reason it must needs be that God hath sufficiently provided for his honour, in the worship which he hath instituted, as much as belongs to the reason and end of those things which he hath instituted. Thereupon I enquire; Whether it be not a presuming of our own, against the divine wisdom, to add to the divine Ordinances by way of supplement, humane ordinances of the same reason and intent with the divine?

There is no question of the lawfulness of appointing some certain times, besides the Lords day, either fixed or variable, to be spent in publick worship, wherein God is to be glorified for Jesus Christ, and the work of redemption wrought by him. There is no question of the lawfulness of appointing days of humiliation and thanksgiving, either for once, or anniversary upon special occasions; and that besides the special occasions of those days, things of universal and perpetual concernment ought to be minded in the religious exercises then performed. In these cases the appointed days and times are only adjuncts of worship, which, as all other things, must be performed in some certain time; and they are for the worship, but the worship is not for them; and they are not intrinsically holy, but only by extrinsick denomination from the holy worship then solemniz'd. But these concessions do not infer (as I suppose) the warrantableness of days appropriated to the same use and ends for which the Lords day is designed of God, and made intrinsically and permanently holy, and sanctifying the worship, as well as sanctified by it, so that it were profaneness to alienate them to other uses. Now as I assuredly believe that the *Lords day* is intrinsically, and permanently, or unalterably holy, as well sanctifying the duties therein performed, as sanctified by them; so I suppose that the appointed feasts, or at least some of them, are set apart by the Church to a state of like holiness.

I confess, that as touching the dedication of such days and times as some of those are which are appointed by the Church, I have not a clearness of judgment to determine for or against the

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warrantableness thereof. Nor would I break with the Church upon this account, but would make those days an occasion of joining in the unquestionable divine worship then celebrated. But I know not how to declare an unfeigned assent and consent to the sanctifying of those days, because in so doing I should not speak the truth, while I doubt of the warrantableness thereof.

*Of the Order for Morning and Evening prayer.*

THE second Rubrick before Morning-prayer, is taken to enjoin the use of the Surplice. Supposing that the use thereof is not in it self unlawful, nevertheless I question whether I may lawfully consent to a Rule enjoining the use of it to such Ministers, and in such Congregations, by which the use thereof is judged-unlawful, or to which it is odious or greatly offensive by invincible or inveterate prejudice. I enquire, Whether a consent to the use of this Rubrick, doth not imply a consent to the enjoining of this Vestment; for the enjoined retaining and using of it, so that sacred Ministrations shall not be performed without it, is the subject-matter of the Rubrick? I enquire also, Whether I may lawfully declare my consent to the use of this Vestment, supposing that tho I do not scruple the bare lawfulness of using it, yet I wish in my heart the use thereof were not retained, but laid aside, in regard of the great offence taken at it, it being a thing unnecessary, and the worship of God being as decently and profitably performed without it, as with it?

Moreover, what were those Ornaments in the Church which were in use by authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King *Edward* the sixth, I do not well know. Some say this Rubrick seems to bring back the Cope and other Vestments forbidden in the Common-prayer-book 5, 6. of *Edw.* 6. to the use whereof I do not see it fit for me to declare my consent.

The Responsals of the Clerk and people, the multiplied repetitions of the *Gloria Patri*, and the *Lords Prayer*; the omission of the Doxology in the *Lords Prayer*, the composition of many short Collects instead of one continued prayer, I can submit unto, and declare my consent to them as to things passable. But if the declaration of consent, imply not only the simple allowableness, but also the laudableness and comparative usefulness or expediency of these things, I am not clear therein.

*Of the Creed of St. Athanasius.*

**I** Heartily own the whole Doctrine of the Trinity, and of the incarnation of the Son of God, as set forth in this Creed; yet I am not satisfied to declare my assent to these assertions, *Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.* Also, *This is the Catholick faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.* Also, *he therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.*

This Creed doth contain deep mysteries, as, that the Son is not made, nor created, but begotten; That the Holy Ghost is neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. The difference between eternal generation, and eternal procession, being a mystery wherein the greatest Divines see but darkly, we may be justly afraid to condemn all persons as incapable of salvation, who do not understand and explicitly believe these mysteries.

Likewise the procession of the Holy Ghost from the *Father* and the *Son*, being here delivered as a part of the faith, concerning which it is asserted, That except every one do keep whole, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly; the undoubted damnation of those Churches and Christians who hold that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only, seems to be thence inferred.

The best answer to these objections that I have seen, I here transcribe out of a book lately written. It is to be considered, That in this Creed there be some things contained and expressed as necessary points of Faith, and other things for the more clear and useful explication of the truth, tho they be not of equal necessity to be understood and believed even by the meanest capacity. Thus if we first consider the contexture of this Creed, the Faith declared necessary concerning the Trinity, is thus expressed in the beginning thereof: *The Catholick Faith is this, That we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.* After this follows an explication useful to set forth the true Christian Doctrine, which begins: *For there is one person of the Father, &c.* After which explication the same necessary doctrine to be known and believed, is thus again expressed and distinguished from that explication, in these words: *So that in all things as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped; he therefore who will be saved,*

*must thus think of the Trinity.* What is contained in this consideration, is the more clear by the following observation, That our Church doth both here and in her Articles evidently receive the *Athanasian Creed*; and yet from the manner of using the Apostles Creed in the form of Baptism, as containing the profession of that Faith into which we are baptized; in the Catechism, as containing all the Articles of the Christian Faith; and in the Visitation of the sick, as being the Rule to try whether he believe as a Christian man should, or not; it is manifest that no more is esteemed in our Church of necessity to salvation for all men to believe, than that only which is contained and expressed in the Apostles Creed.

Hereunto I make this Reply;

In this point the question is not, What the Church of *England*, but what the *Athanasian Creed* appointed by this Church to be read on certain solemn days, instead of the Apostles Creed, declares to be of necessity to salvation. Now the thing that is manifestly asserted in this Creed to be of necessity to salvation, is the intire belief of the Catholick Faith, as it is there expressed. For it is said, *Which Faith except every one keep whole, &c.* Wherefore to distinguish the summary of the doctrine of the Trinity set down in the beginning and the conclusion, from the whole intermediate explication thereof, as if the belief of the one, but not of the other, were affirmed to be necessary to salvation, is a very forc'd and unwarrantable narrowing of the intendment of the Words. The explication, as well as the said Summary, is set forth as that Catholick Faith, which except every one keep whole and undefiled, he shall without doubt perish everlastingly. Yea, it is expressly said in the close, *So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped; He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.* What less than the whole doctrine aforesaid can the said words, *in all things as aforesaid*, refer to? For ought doth appear, no one part of the doctrine or explication is made more necessary to be believed than another. Besides, in the *Nicene Creed*, in the doctrine of the Person of Christ, why may not the summary thereof expressed in these words, *and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God*, be distinguished in like manner from the following explicatory words, *begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, &c.* as if the one, but not the other, were thereby intended as necessary to be believed?

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Moreover if the sense of this Creed in the said Assertions be not to exclude from salvation all such as do not so distinctly know, nor so explicately believe concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, as its sets forth in the explication thereof ; yet certainly it can be taken for no less than the excluding of such as apprehend and believe in any point contrary thereto, which is the case of the *Greek Church* in denying the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son.

Admit the said Assertions are to be restrained to those that believe not, as is expressed only in the summary of the doctrine : I then make this query, Whether none of those who being of very low capacities, do not distinctly apprehend and explicately believe one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, so as in their apprehensions neither to confound the persons, nor divide the substance, can truly and savingly fear God, and believe in Christ?

Here let it be no offence to make the following Queries.

1. Whether it be certain by the word of God, that all those of the Christian profession whose apprehensions of the Trinity were not fully conformable to the Faith of the *Homonians* (as the Orthodox were called in those times ) did perish everlastingly ?
2. Whether it be certain by the Word of God, that all those who so apprehended of the union of the natures in Christ, as was expressed either by the *Nestorians* or *Eutychians*, did perish everlastingly ?

Furthermore I enquire, Whether it be certain by the Word of God, That all Pagans who have lived since the times of Christianity, and to whom the Gospel was never published, are damned? In the aforesaid Assertions the form of words being unlimited and universal, seems to import so much. Now the case of such who live in meer negative infidelity, being without the revelation of the Gospel, is different from theirs who by wilful perverseness overthrow the Faith, against the evidence of that Divine testimony in the Holy Scripture, which they profess to believe. Without doubt none of the whole stock of Mankind can be saved, but through the Redeemer Jesus Christ. But it is not so certain that all are damned who live and dye without the knowledge of Redemption by him. I certainly know, That without holiness no man shall see the Lord ; and that no man can be holy, without

the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit. But that none of them are sanctified who are without the knowledg of Christ and his Gospel, is not so evidently and certainly known to me, either from Scripture or Reason.

The sum of the matter is , That I am afraid in the solemn rehearsal of a Creed in the midst of Divine Service, to adjudg those to eternal damnation that are not so adjudged by the word of God ; yet I heartily and entirely assent to the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Incarnation of Christ, according to the explication thereof, as set forth in this Creed ; and I would not give my suffrage that any should be allowed in the publick Ministry, who holds in any point contrary to the said doctrine.

*Of the LITANY.*

THE manner of the composure of the Litany, and more especially that the formally petitioning words are in great part uttered by the people only, I judg not so inconvenient but that I may comply therewith ; yet I had much rather, and do heartily wish that it were otherwise framed. Now I enquire, Whether being thus minded, I may justly declare my unfeigned consent to the use thereof?

*Of the COLLECTS, &c.*

IN the Collect for Christmas-day these words, *And as at this time to be born,* are to be considered. That our Saviour was born on or about the 25th of December, is a matter of great uncertainty, and little probability, and contrary to the most rational Chronology. It is therefore questioned, whether the said words may be stately used in a solemn prayer of the Church. Tho this be a small matter, yet the question is, Whether one may declare an assent and consent to the use of it, while he doth not believe it to be true?

*Of the Order for the Ministration of the Holy Communion.*

IT is liable to exception, That a great part of the Communion Service (as it is called) which makes a great part of the Morning-prayer for the Lords day, is appointed to be read at the



the Communion-Table, when there is no administration of the Sacrament. If the declared consent hereunto, import no more, than that, it may be complied with in submission to authority, I shall not refuse it.

In the Fourth Commandment, it is appointed to be read, *The Lord blessed the Seventh day*, instead of *the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day*. It may well be questioned, whether one may consent to the changing of God own Words, in this Commandment, into other words of mans chusing? But if the declared consent respect not the changing of one word for another, but only the simple using of that word, which stands in the Liturgy; I shall not utterly refuse it, seeing it hath nothing that is false or evil; nor any so considerable inconvenience, (that I discern), as to necessitate to a non-compliance. Yet I dislike the retaining of it.

In the Exhortation, preparatory to the Sacrament, it is declared, *That it is requisite, that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in Gods Mercy, and quiet conscience*. Here it is said not only, that it is a duty to be so qualified in coming, but that it is requisite that no man should come, but so qualified. This seems to mean, that the said qualification is so necessary, that none may lawfully come without it. It is hereupon to be considered, whether a godly Christian under doubts and fears touching his own estate towards God, and apprehensive of Gods displeasure towards him, may not have that Grace which may enable him to come acceptably to this Sacrament?

\*Tho I do not scruple the lawfulness of kneeling in the act of receiving the Sacramental Bread and Wine, yet it is hard to consent to a Rule, that debars from the Lords Supper all Christians who through unfeigned scruple of conscience refuse this gesture; especially, considering that it was not used in the first Celebration by our Saviour with his Disciples, nor in the Apostles time, as doth any way appear; nor afterwards, when General Councils forbad kneeling in any act of adoration on the *Lords day*. To this it may be answered, that it is not the enjoying, but the using of this gesture, that is consented to; and the objected inconvenience follows not the using, but the enjoying thereof in the rigor, as to debar from the Sacrament those that scruple it. But I further inquire: Whether a consent to the use of

a Rubrick, which hath the nature of an injunction, doth not imply a consent not only to the using, but to the injoyning of the thing therein prescribed? Moreover the very using or observing of this Rubrick by the Minister, is an injunction in respect of the people; because it includes an obligation upon him not to deliver the Sacrament to them, except they use this gesture.

In the Rubrick after the Communion, *Note that every Parishioner shall communicate, at the least three times in the year, whereof Easter to be one.* That it is the duty of every Parishioner to be fit to receive the Sacrament, and accordingly to receive it; also that the Church may require this duty of all her Members, and Censure those who continue wilfully unfit, is not to be questioned. But this Rubrick enjoyns all Parishioners to communicate, and the Parish-Ministers to admit them, without any proviso here made touching their fitness, or due caution elsewhere taken for it, that I know of; when it is sadly known, that in most Parishes, too many Parishioners are notoriously unfit. And we see the practice consequent to this Rule, a constant general admission or intrusion of notoriously ignorant or ungodly Persons, who pollute the Communion of the Church, and eat and drink Damnation to themselves. Besides this, Infidels, Papists, and such as secretly at least renounce the Communion of the Parish-Churches, are Parishioners in many places. Now tho such may be compelled to use those means which God hath made universally necessary to bring the ignorant and erroneous to the knowledge of the truth; yet I do not see, that they may be enjoined in word or deed to profess what they believe not, or to take that which is the special Priviledg of Visible Church-Members.

*Of the Order of Baptism.*

THE sign of the Cross in Baptism, hath been more suspected to be unlawful than any other ceremony enjoined in the Church of *England*. I shall first set down what hath made me question the lawfulness of it; and afterwards, what may be said in answer to it.

Against the lawfulness of the sign of the Cross, it is thus objected. It is not a meer circumstance, but an ordinance of  
Divine

Divine Worship of mans devising, and as great as an external rite can be, and hath in it the nature of a Sacrament. Here is an outward Visible sign of an inward spiritual Grace. The outward sign, is the representation of the Cross, the instrument of Christs Suffering; the spiritual Grace, is the Grace of being a Christian, or a Soldier and Servant of Christ, and of Christian fortitude consequent thereunto, as the Words of the Liturgy do import: *And we sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token, hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, and to fight manfully under his banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil, and to continue Christs faithful Soldier and Servant unto his lives end.*

If it were granted it hath not the compleat Nature of a Sacrament; yet one essential part thereof is most apparently in it; that is, to be an engaging-sign for our part in the Covenant of Grace. For in the Liturgy it is declared to be a token of our engagement to Christ crucified in the relations of his Soldier and Servant, and to perform the duties of those relations. Moreover, as Baptism dedicates to Christ, so doth the sign of the Cross, according to the expresse words of the Canon, viz. *It is an honourable badge, whereby the party baptized is dedicated to the Service of him that dyed upon the Cross.*

Hereupon I inquire, Whether an Ordinance that is of the same import with the Sacraments of the Covenant of Grace, or an essential part thereof, may be instituted by humane authority, or lawfully used by those that are under authority? Tho the Imposers say, it is not a Sacrament, yet while they declare its meaning to be of the formal Nature of a Sacrament, they make it to be one indeed, tho in word they deny it. Whereas to avoid this Argument, some say, it is impossible for man to make a Sacrament; therefore the sign of the Cross cannot be such: it is answered, That tho God only can institute a lawful and valid Sacrament of his Covenant; yet man may presume to institute an Ordinance of the same nature, and reason, and intent, with a Sacrament of divine institution, tho it be unlawful, and of no effect. And such an Ordinance is truly and properly a Sacrament, tho an unlawful one, as any other Ordinance devised by man, that hath the Nature and formal Reason of Religious Worship, is truly and properly Worship, whatsoever may be said of the lawfulness or unlawfulness thereof.

*The Reply.*

The grand objection against the lawfulness of the sign of the Cross, as used in Baptism, supposes that it is of the same Nature with a Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace, whereupon the proper Nature of such a Sacrament is necessary to be considered.

Sacraments are signs appointed to ratifie, seal, and confirm the Covenant of God, and to tender and exhibit the Grace of that Covenant to us. And if any humane authority constitute any sign to this end, it would be a high intrenchment upon the sovereignty of God. But the sign of the Cross in Baptism, is not used to this end and purpose. It is used indeed as a token by way of remembrance, and as a testimony of engagement, that the party baptized stands obliged to maintain the Christian profession and warfare. And altho such profession and engagement be included in a Sacrament; yet it is not peculiar thereunto, or of its specifically differencing nature. Standing at the Creed, is a professing and engaging sign of Christianity, yet it is not a Sacrament.

It appears both by the 30th Canon, and by the Liturgy it self, That the Infant baptized, is by vertue of Baptism, before it be signed with the sign of the Cross, received into the Congregation of Christs Flock, as a perfect member thereof, and not by any power ascribed to the sign of the Cross. And tho it be declared by the Canon, That it is an honourable badge, whereby the party Baptized is dedicated, &c. yet this Dedication by the Cross, is wholly distinct from the baptismal Dedication, to be a Member of the Church. We must understand, that the Church by this sign engageth the party upon her account to the Service of Christ. The Minister acting in the Name of God, baptizeth the party in the name of the Father, &c. but acting in the name of the Church, he signeth him with the sign of the Cross. This sign is not any tender of Grace received from God, nor any proper consecration to God, in his Name and Authority, and as by his Symbol; but a declarative token of duty and engagement to God. The *Israelites* were circumcised, kept the Passover, and had their Sacrifices, all which were tokens of the Covenant between God and them: Yet *Joshua* did solemnly engage them to God, by setting up a Stone as a Witness thereof.

The Objection and Reply, I leave for a while to further consideration. I have somewhat more to say touching this point.

The Stone of Witness set up by *Jeshua*, was a meer professing or witnessing-sign of the *Israelites* acknowledged Relation and Obligation to God; and the erecting or using of it, was not for their Dedication to God, as by an Act of solemn Worship. The using of the Cross in Banners and Coyons, &c. is no Act of Religious Worship; but a professing-sign, or signal Action, to testify to the World, that they who use it, do believe in Christ crucified. And surely, it is not unlawful to profess by other signs, as well as by words, that we are Christians.

But the sign of the Cross in Baptism, is a solemn and stated Symbol of a Divine Mystery: Its usage therein, is not a meer circumstance, but a very important Act of Divine Worship. It is a complete Institution of it self, added to the Ordinance of Christ, appearing to be of the same nature and end. It is evidently used as a rite of solemn Dedication to God, upon the terms of the Covenant of Grace; and in this regard it is plainly Sacramental, and it seems a Dedication added by way of supplement to the Baptismal Dedication, and in that regard derogatory from the sufficiency of Baptism to that end. It is also performed by a Minister of Christ, acting as his Minister towards one of his Flock. Moreover, it is a rite, not of private arbitrary use, but of public institution; and it is made a matter, not of occasional temporary Observance, but a perpetual Ordinance of Worship, of the same reason with those Ordinances which God hath instituted to be universally and perpetually observed by his Church. Sacred rites of this nature, more than those which God hath instituted, are not of that rank of things which are necessary *in genere*, and need to be determined *in specie*; and being not necessary, they may be matter of scruple to those, who think that unnecessary rites of Worship should not be ordained, or statedly used in conjunction with the Holy Sacrament.

That God hath reserved some things in Religion to his own appointment, and left other things therein to humane Determination, is not to be questioned. But to discern exactly and thoroughly between the one and the other sort, I want a suf-

sufficient clearness of Judgment. That the sign of the Cross in Baptism, as now used, is to me a puzzling difficulty, I am not ashamed to confess, tho it may be thought a weakness in me.

If the sign of the Cross were lawful, I am not satisfied to declare an assent and consent to the imposing of it, as a bar against the Baptism of the Children of those Parents who judge it unlawful, and a sin in them to permit the signing of their Children therewith. To this it may be answered, That it is not the injoyning, but the using of this ceremony, that is consented to. But here also I inquire, Whether I may lawfully declare an unfeigned consent to the use of this Rubrick, if I dissent from the injunction of the things thereby injoyned? The use of this Rubrick doth include such an Obligation upon the Minister, as hinders his Baptizing of the Children of such Parents as are before described. Further I inquire, Whether I may declare my unfeigned consent to the use of this ceremony, if I be persuaded, that it is not in it self unlawful, yet wish in my heart, that the use thereof were not retained, in regard it is necessary, and an occasion of stumbling to many? I may submit to the use of a thing, not simply evil, when I may not declare a hearty consent to it.

The saving Regeneration of all baptized Infants, and their undoubted Salvation if they dye before actual sin, being asserted in the Liturgy, is to be considered. In the prayer after the Child is Baptized, are these words, *We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit, &c.* At the end of publick Baptism, there is this Rubrick, *It is certain by Gods word, that Children which are baptized, dying before actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.* Admitting that the injoyned Declaration doth not respect this Rubrick, as being not a matter of practice, but a doctrinal assertion: Nevertheless the form of thanksgiving for all baptized Children ascribed, is unquestionably contained under it, and I am engaged to examine the truth and lawfulness thereof.

The extent of the efficacy of Baptism is a point much controverted by Protestant Divines among themselves; and the state of Infants seems not to be so fully and clearly express'd in Scripture, as the state of adult persons; and I acknowledge my self unable to determine thereof in the manner here required.

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The Question is not, Whether there be any saving-benefit to Infants by Baptism? But, whether every Infant admitted thereunto, be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and received of God for his own Child by Adoption? &c. That an Infant be a partaker of these saving-benefits, besides his being baptized, this condition is requisite, that he be duly qualified for Baptism, and have right thereunto in the sight of God. Be it granted that the Sacrament hath its effect, where the receiver doth not set a bar against it; yet it must be supposed, that the receiver is one who hath right to Baptism in the sight of God, and to whom the promise of Salvation doth belong. But I do not find that the promise of Salvation belongs to Children, whose Parents, Proparents, or proprietors, are impious, or infidels, under the Mask of the Christian profession; or that such have right before God to Baptism, whatsoever right they may have before the Church, while the impiety or infidelity of the Parents, &c. is not discovered. It is not enough to say, that the Infants title to Baptism is founded in Christs Institution of the Sacrament. For as there must be an Institution of the Sacrament, so there must be a due qualification of the subject that receives it. The Infants of *Jews*, or *Mahomitans*, or *Pagans*, do not actually set a bar against the efficacy of the Sacrament; yet it cannot be said of such Infants, in case they were baptized, that they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The Parents infidelity doth put a bar to the efficacy of the Sacrament towards his Infant; and this bar is not properly a punishment to the Infant, but merely a non-deliverance, or a being left in the state of sin and wrath, wherein he is by nature.

I still query, Whether the aforesaid assertion, That it is certain by Gods word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved; be not contained under the Declaration? It being the matter of a directing Rubrick, and for use, as I suppose. Moreover this Rubrick seems evidently included in the enjoined Subscription, and to be justified thereby, as not contrary to the word of God. Now the same things that are objected about the saving Regeneration of all baptized Children, may be objected in reference to this also. Besides, to affirm the certainty of this position by the word of God, is much harder than to admit it as a probable truth only. Whereas it is said, that this position may be

acknowledged as certainly true of children indefinitely, without denying it to be true universally. I answer, That to understand it but of children indefinitely, is to make it an insignificant and useless Assertion, unworthy to be matter of a Rubrick, as shewing no more, but that it is certainly true, that all baptized children are not damned, but some saved. This is not rationally apprehended to be the meaning thereof.

According to the order prescribed in the Liturgy, Children are devoted to God, and brought into the Covenant of Grace, and the Baptismal Vow by Godfathers and Godmothers, who have no propriety in them, nor right of dedicating them to God, or bringing them into his Covenant; and the Parents who have right, and by whom the Infants have title to this privilege, are excluded. It is not mans Law that can authorize any to bring children into the bond of the Covenant with God. And there is no Law of God that authorizeth any besides Parents, Proparents, or Proprietors, so to do. Tho the taking in of Sureties in conjunction with the Parents for a greater assurance of the Infants Christian Education, may be commendable and useful, if those Sureties did indeed concern themselves therein, and not make it a matter of meer formality, ( as generally it is made ) yet there can be no reason for such a rigid insisting upon Sureties, the use of whom at the most is but expedient for greater caution about the Childs future education, and in the mean time to overlook, yea to exclude the Parents open and solemn dedication of the infant, which is necessary.

That form of speaking to the Infant by the Sureties, *Dost thou renounce, &c. dost thou believe, &c. wilt thou be baptized, &c. wilt thou obediently keep, &c.* and the taking of several answers as from him by the Sureties, is not a form of words expressing ones being devoted or brought into Gods Covenant by another, but of ones own professed present actual believing, desiring, and vowing. If it be said, This is spoken to the Sureties in the Childs name, and tis a declaring of what the child undertakes by his baptism. I answer, The child is not capable of doing any thing in the case, and the child doth not, and cannot undertake any thing by another as in his name. To say the Infant doth these things passively, and that he doth passively accept the Covenant, is that which I do not understand. I grant that baptized infants are under a vow of dedication to God, but not a vow made by themselves, but by those

those whom God hath authorized to dedicate them, and by which they are bound, as much as by a vow actually made by themselves when they are capable.

*Of the C A T E C H I S M.*

**E**Very baptized person is taught thus to answer,—*in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

By the very receiving of baptism, neither infants, nor the adult are first put into a state of grace; but those who by their own faith, or by the faith of their Parents, were before in the Covenant of Grace, are by Baptism solemnly invested in that Grace. Ones being in the Covenant of Grace, is a prerequisite condition to the saving use of this Sacrament, which is the solemn dedication to God of one so qualified, and his solemn investiture in the Grace of the Covenant.

But whether the said words be understood of the first conferring of those benefits, or of the solemn investiture therein; nevertheless be it considered, Whether it be fit to teach every Catechised person to believe, That by his baptism he was made a partaker of, or solemnly invested in those high privileges which only the children of true believers do receive by their Infant-baptism. Be it also considered, whether it tends not to cause many, who are yet in the state of sin, to believe that they are in the state of grace.

*Of the Order of Confirmation.*

**A**NY such baptized persons as are come to a competent age, and can say in their Mother-tongue, the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and also can answer to other questions of the Catechism, and to the Bishops interrogatory touching the renewing of the Vow made in their name at their Baptism, and their consenting thereto, shall answer, *I do*, are according to the Rule of this Book, sufficiently qualified for confirmation. Be it considered, Whether all this may not be said by a person in whom appears no credibility of a sincere, yea, or of an intelligent profession. If it be said, it is left to the Bishops discretion by these words of the Rubrick, *and if the bishop approve of them, he shall confirm them*; nevertheless the Rule here set down, doth express and require no more. The Query is, Whether  
I may.

I may consent to the use of a Rule insufficient for its end ?

Confirmation is reserved to the Bishop alone; yet it is ordinarily impossible for him to take due notice of all persons to be confirmed within his Diocese; and consequently it cannot be duly administered to a multitude of persons that are to be brought to it. Whereas it is alledged, That this reservation was the usage of the ancient Church; let it be considered, that the primitive or more ancient bishops were bishops but of one particular Church, and were capable of taking the oversight of every particular person of their flock; and did personally perform the same. But the present bishops being bishops of many hundred Churches, have commonly more souls in their several Diocesses, than an hundred bishops can personally watch over.

In the prayer immediately before the act of Confirmation, it is said of all persons admitted to it, That God hath vouchsafed to regenerate them by water and the Holy Ghost, and hath given them the forgiveness of all their sins. I enquire, Whether this be warrantable, and according to truth, considering what is the corruption of human nature, and what the inclinations and behaviour of most young ones are, and what regeneration by the Holy Ghost doth import; and how such as are far from any credible appearance of Regeneration, may be qualified for Confirmation, according to the terms prescribed in this book; and besides all this, that children of ungodly Parents, to whom the promise of salvation doth not belong, cannot be supposed to be really regenerate and pardoned by Baptism.

Let the tendency of the said assertion, as also of that touching the saving regeneration, and undoubted salvation of all baptized infants, be well considered, whether it be to bring men to a sight of their misery in the unregenerate state, and an endeavour of their recovery by real regeneration, or to keep them from it.

The Rubrick after Confirmation, *There shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.*

This Rubrick is not only in the nature of a Directory, shewing that Confirmation according to due order is requisite to be received by persons before they come to the Communion; but a rigid exclusion of all from the Communion who are not confirmed, or are not ready and desirous to be confirmed according to the prescribed manner. It is granted, That a credible, approved  
pro-

profession of Faith and Repentance, may be made necessary to admission; because they, who do not make such profession, are justly excluded from Communion in the Sacrament. But there are many that are fit for this Communion, that are not willing to submit to this order of Confirmation. And if their refusal of it be culpable, yet it may not deserve so great punishment, as exclusion from the Sacrament.

*Of the Form of Matrimony.*

**T**ouching this form of words, *Who hath consecrated the state of Matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual Marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church*; be it considered, that this Doctrine is not found in Scripture, that Marriage was consecrated to represent the said mystery. It is indeed a similitude used to express that mystical union. But every similitude used in Scripture to express a holy Mystery, (as that of the Vine and the Branches, to express the Union betwixt Christ and the faithful), is not consecrated to a representation thereof. Upon this very ground, the Papists hold Matrimony to be a Sacrament, because God hath put in it the signification of so excellent a thing, as the indissoluble conjunction of Christ with the Church. The Apostle, *Eph. 5. 30, 31.* speaking of a great mystery, doth not in any respect intend the Marriage-Institution and Union, but only the Union of Christ and his Church. Now tho this be a small matter, for which a peaceable man would not break with a Church; yet such a one may question, Whether he may declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the use of it, while he doth not believe it to be true.

The Rubrick at the end of Matrimony. *It is convenient that the new Married persons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of their Marriage, or at the first opportunity after their Marriage.*

I question, whether it be convenient, that the new Married Persons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of their Marriage. In case married Persons could at the time of their Marriage be composed to such a holy, and spiritual, and heavenly frame, and so sequester their thoughts from the concerns of the body, as requisite for the solemn duty of receiving the Sacrament; and wishal should abstain from those heightened sensi-

sensitive enjoynments, which are used at that time, this Rubrick were allowable and commendable. But it is not so with one of a thousand; if with any one; nor do I know, that it is requisite it should be so, at least ordinarily. The rule of Scripture is, That Persons should abstain from conjugal embraces, in time of most solemn Religious exercises, 1 Cor. 7. 5. This also is but a small matter, for which no breach should be made. But a sober peaceable man may question, whether he may assent and consent to the use of such a Rubrick, as to that part of it? Yet questionless, it may be convenient that the new-married Persons, if duly qualified, should receive the Holy Communion at the first opportunity after their Marriage.

*Of the Order for Visitation of the Sick.*

**R**ubrick, *The Sick person shall be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he shall feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession the Priest shall absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it.*

Here the Priest is desired and required to absolve every Sick person, after special confession of sin, in case he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, if he humbly and heartily desire it. And the Absolution is to be given absolutely unto every such person, and not conditionally, if he truly repent. In defence of Absolution given upon the only terms prescribed in this Book, it doth not satisfy to say, that if the Sick person shew himself truly penitent; his Absolution ought not to be left to the Ministers discretion. For every Minister ought to exercise a judgment of discretion about his own Act, especially an Act of such importance, as the absolving of a sinner from all his sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And the question still remains, whether every Sick person, that can verbally express as much as is here required, be truly penitent; yea or make a credible profession thereof? To presume every one is truly penitent, who is desirous to receive Absolution, is a charity larger than of Gods allowing. That the Absolution should be pronounced absolutely, and never conditionally; it doth not satisfy to say, that the condition is understood: For it is not reasonably supposed that all the Sick, who can say so much as is here required of them,  
do



do understand or consider, that it is spoken to them conditionally. Too many be stupidly senseless, and grossly ignorant of their own spiritual estate, and of the true conditions of reconciliation with God.

In the Rubrick of the Communion of the Sick, the Curate is required to administer the Sacrament of the Lords Supper to every Sick person that is desirous to receive it; but he is not allowed to consider whether he be fit to receive it. To presume that every one is fit to receive, that is desirous to receive, is a Charity larger than of Gods allowing. It is known by sad experience, that many very bad men are desirous to receive the Sacrament when they are Sick:

It may be considered, whether this manner of giving Absolution, and administering the Sacrament to every Sick person that is desirous to receive the same, tend to bring men to repentance, or to harden them in impenitency.

*Of the Order for Burial of the Dead.*

**T**Hese ensuing forms, Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the Soul of our dear Brother here departed, we commit his Body to the ground, &c. in sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection to eternal Life. Also, we give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our Brother out of the miseries of this sinful World. Also, that when we shall depart this Life, we may rest in him, as our Hope is this our Brother doth: are to be used at the interment of all persons whatsoever, but such as dye unbaptized, or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands on themselves. But multitudes, that are not here accepted, dye in notorious sin, and give no credible evidence of their repentance.

Tho we be not infallibly certain, that such notorious sinners, and in all appearance impenitent to the last, are damned; yet it may be questioned, whether there be ground of hope for their being saved, and whether they may be owned as Brethren that rest in Christ, and whom God of his great mercy hath taken to himself, and on whose behalf we ought to give thanks to God, that he hath taken them out of the miseries of this life. It may also be questioned, Whether it be of safe or dangerous tendency for the Church in her publick Leturgy,

solemnly to declare all this at their interment.

Tho the words in *sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal Life*, be to be understood of the Resurrection in general, and not of the Resurrection of the deceased party; yet the very committing of his Body to the ground, in *sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection to eternal Life* in general, doth imply some degree of grounded hope of his part in that Resurrection, or else the said words seem to be used impertinently.

Whereas it is said, *There is some degree of Hope*, where we cannot determine the contrary: I answer, that this which is called a degree of Hope, is a meer negative, or nothing, and signifies no more, than that we are not infallibly sure of mens final Impenitence and Damnation. This is not properly any degree of Hope, nor doth it include any Judgment made of the party, it being a meer negative. And here no Judgment of Charity is included, because here is no ground thereof supposed.

It doth not satisfie to say, That the Church supposeth all who dye in her Communion to be hopeful; because this supposeth and requireth the due exercise of discipline in the Church. Now we see that discipline is not so exercised, but that multitudes, in whom no credible or hopeful evidence of repentance doth appear, dye in her Communion. And this omission of discipline is constant, general, and uncontrolled.

It is granted, that dying-impenitents do not go immediately into the power of the Devil, but first into the hands of the great God, to be disposed of by him according to the conditions of the Gospel-Covenant, which flow from a grant of mercy. Nevertheless, we know that the Law of Grace and Mercy finally abused and violated, doth contain a Denunciation of the greatest Wrath and Vengeance. And it seems very improper to say of one whom God hath taken into his own hands to adjudg to everlasting punishment for the final violation and contempt of the Covenant of Grace, That God hath taken him to his mercy, or unto himself of his great Mercy; because he judgeth and condemneth him for violating the Law of Mercy. Besides, what mortal man certainly knows whether the Judgment and Execution immediately after Death, be not the same thing.

*Some general Observations upon the Book of Common-Prayer.*

**A**CCORDING to the Tenor of this Book, every person in the external Communion of the Church, is set forth as godly or regenerate, when multitudes in the said Communion are palpably unregenerate and ungodly. This appears by several important passages already noted, touching every person baptized, confirmed, interred, &c. and by these further Instances. In the order of Matrimony, for every Married couple, this form is to be said, *O Lord save thy Servant, and thy Handmaid, who put their trust in thee*; and the like for every Sick person that is visited by the Priest, and for every Woman that is Churched. It is likewise recommended as convenient, that the new married Persons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of their Marriage, or at the first opportunity after their Marriage, which seems to suppose, that all persons who may lawfully be married, are fit to receive the Sacrament of Christs Body and Blood.

The Objection here made, is not against the applying of the aforesaid, or the like form of words, or the vouchsafing of the aforesaid Privilege of the Holy Sacrament to those that give any credible evidence of their faith and repentance; but that it is done to all indifferently, whatsoever their state towards God appears to be. Indeed the Church may be called Holy, as the Apostles writing to the Churches, give them the stile of Saints, and those that are sanctified, and holy Brethren, and the like. But the query is, Whether they would, or we may account every Parishioner, who is not excommunicate in this present way of Church-Government, to be penitent, and believing, and holy; and wether we may use towards every particular Parishioner, such forms of words as import their unfeigned faith, notwithstanding a manifest appearance of impenitence and ungodliness?

If the omission of things most necessary in some main parts of the Liturgy, be a just ground of not declaring an unfeigned assent and consent to the forms as there prescribed: I may urge, that in the general Confession there is no mention of Original sin. As for those words, *the devices and desires of our own hearts*, they denote actual sins of the heart. And that clause, *There*

*is no health in us*, betokens there is no Salvation or Deliverance in our selves. Or if it were designed in this place to signify Original sin, it is a very obscure expression thereof. This Omission is the more liable to exception, if it be upon these Principles and Suppositions, that all who are in the external Communion of the Church, are regenerate; that all baptized Persons, yea or all baptized in Infancy, whether they be the Children of the promise or not, are delivered from the guilt of Original sin: Or that no reliques of Original sin, which are truly and properly sin, remain in the regenerate.

It may be likewise urged, that in the said Confession there is no sufficient expressing of actual sins in particular; and that the Morning and Evening prayer mostly consists of meer generals, without such particular Confession of sins, and Petition for spiritual Graces, as is requisite to be made on the behalf of the whole Congregation. There may be indeed particular Confessions and Petitions proper for particular Persons, which are not here intended: But there are others of common concernment and necessity to all Christians. And my query is, Whether this sort may be itatedly omitted in a publick Liturgy?

*Of the form of ordering Bishops, Priests and Deacons.*

**I**N the Preface it is said, *That it is evident to all men diligently reading the holy Scriptures and ancient Authors, That from the Apostles time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christs Church, Bishops, Priests and Deacons.* Between the Orders of bishops and deacons, there is unquestionably an essential difference. But if by the orders of bishops and priests, be meant several Orders or Offices specifically or essentially different, and not several degrees of superiority and inferiority in the same office, the essential nature whereof is in both, I cannot by subscription declare that the said assertion is not contrary to the word of God. Upon diligent reading of the Holy Scripture, I cannot find therein the office or order of a presbyter that is no bishop.

Nor can I consent to this passage in the said Preface, *No man shall be accounted or taken for a lawful Priest, or be suffered to execute the function, except he be called according to this form, or hath had formerly Episcopal Ordination.* I am no way satisfied in the disabling or degrading of so many Ministers as are ordained only by Presbyters.

*Of the promissory part of the second Article of Subscription in these words, That he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed in publick prayer, and administration of Sacraments, and one other. Can. 36.*

THE last words [*and none other*] taken in their most obvious sense, seem to exclude **all other form** of prayer used by the Minister before or after Sermon, whether conceived at the present, or precomposed. For prayer before and after Sermon is publick prayer. Now it is expressly promised by the Subscriber, that he will use no other form in publick prayer, than what is prescribed in the said book. I know many Conformists do practise otherwise than is here expressed. But I know also, that some do urge this and another Canon against their practise; and I now enquire into the plain force of the words, which ought to be regarded by a considerate Subscriber.

I suppose it will be granted by all, That the Church intends hereby to engage against using any other form whatsoever in the administration of Sacraments; and thereupon one would think, that she intended hereby to engage also against using any other form whatsoever in publick prayer, seeing in the words of the promise, the engagement against the use of any other form, both in publick prayer, and administration of Sacraments, is alike expressed.

If any sufficient reason or good warrant can be produced for restraining the words to the excluding only of the use of any other publick Liturgy, as for example the Mass-book, or of any other publick Directory of Worship, instead of the Common-prayer; nevertheless it were to be wished, that men might not be enjoined to make a promise in those words, which in their plain sense do express an engagement which is not thereby intended.

I have considered many particulars which come within the compass of the Declaration of unfeigned assent and consent enjoined by the Act of Uniformity, and the Subscription required by the Thirty sixth Canon. In all which my desire and design is not to disaffect any persons to the Book of Common prayer, but to receive satisfaction, if it may be had, concerning the things wherein I am dissatisfied. For I own the said form of worship to be in the  
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main sound and good for the matter of it, and I sincerely join with the Congregation in the same, tho I take it to be less perfect than is to be desired. It is not therefore the use of a Liturgy in the publick Worship of God, nor the reading of the Common-prayer in the ordinary daily service, that makes me a Nonconformist. But the high strain of the Declaration and Subscription, and the strict observation of all things prescribed, are difficulties which I cannot overcome.

This consideration of the present state of Conformity, hath proceeded according to the limited sense of the Declaration, as restrained to the use of things, which being a probable limitation, I have willingly admitted for peace sake. But there be those who will not allow it, saying, that the true intendment of the said Declaration is to be taken from the plain signification of the form of words wherein it is expressed, which is no less than a full justification of all things whatsoever contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common-prayer, &c. as right and good.

I confess I am not able with a judgment of certainty to determine which of these two explications doth truly and rightly expound the full intendment of this Declaration. And tho I have admitted the more restrained meaning thereof as probable, yet the truth is I have not found that it doth any great matter to make the way of Conformity easie or passable, as appears by the foregoing examination of many things contained and prescribed in the Liturgy. But if the other opinion of the more comprehensive meaning, be true, the way is yet more difficult; for then the Declaration doth imply an acknowledgment of the truth of all assertions any where contained in this Book; also of the truth, lawfulness, and goodness of all expressions, not only in the divine Service it self, but in all the directing-Rules, viz. Rubricks, Calendar, and Tables; also of the lawfulness and fitness not only of the use of things enjoined, but of the very injunction or imposition, the said directing Rules being so many injunctions strictly requiring us to observe the things prescribed in them. But (as I have before observed) if the sense of the Declaration be restrained to the use of things, it doth not appear that the enjoined Subscription is to be so restrained.

As I have said, I consent to the use of the Common-prayer as a tolerable Form of Worship; but that doth not imply my allowing of all and every thing therein contained. Upon the review  
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of the whole matter, let it be impartially considered, Whether a Declaration of so high a strain, about a book of meer humane and fallible composition, containing in it many hundreds of propositions and consequences, should be so rigorously exacted. If some recognition in this kind be thought necessary, it were to be desired, that it might be contrived in a form of words less perplexing and ensnaring, yet sufficiently engaging.

*Of the Renouncing of the Obligation of the COVENANT,  
Required by the Act of Uniformity.*

**T**HIS Covenant was not meerly a League between men, confirmed by an Oath ; but a Vow to God of several things directly respecting him. And tho its intent were to engage men one to another, yet that was not the whole nor chief intent thereof : but its chief intendment was to engage all the Covenanters jointly to God.

Howsoever it be called an Oath, yet so far as it is an Oath of things which directly and immediately respect God, or that are to be performed towards him, it hath the nature of a Vow.

To invalidate the Obligation of an Oath or Vow made to God, is a thing of a high nature, and had need to be done with a clear judgment.

One point of this Oath or Vow, was to endeavour Church-Reformation according to our Places and Callings. And no Reformation can be without some Alteration.

Here the question that concerns me, is, Whether there lies no secondary obligation from this Covenant, upon any person that took it, to do that which he was antecedently obliged to do, *viz.* To endeavour in his own place and calling, and only by legal ways, that alteration of Government in the Church, which is just and necessary to be made?

It is to be considered, that the Renunciation required, is to declare not only that there lies no obligation from the Covenant to endeavour an alteration of the substance of Church-government, to wit, Episcopacy ; but that there lies no obligation thence to endeavour any alteration of Government in the Church. The extent of the words doth equally respect any change in any point, tho never so just and necessary.

It is a point too high for me to judge of all persons whatsoever who have taken this Covenant, how far they are or are not bound thereby. And put case I may not be so clear and sure in this matter, as to assert the obligation thereof, I may also not be so clear and sure therein, as to renounce the obligation thereof.

As Gods Moral Law primarily obligeth to endeavour Church-Reformation, while there is corruption in the Church; so a solemn Swearing or Vowing thereof, infers a secondary or further obligation thereunto, in respect of the Oath or Vow.

God being a Party in an Oath or Vow of duties directly respecting him, and antecedently required by his Law, no humane Authority can nullifie the obligation thereof.

The unlawfulness of the imposition, and the defect of Authority in the imposers, or that it was taken constrainedly, or in sinful circumstances, doth not nullifie the obligation of an Oath or Vow, when the matter thereof is in it self a duty.

The conjunction of things unlawful in an Oath or Vow, doth not make it null as to those things which are antecedently necessary. This Covenant consists of many parts, which are indeed for the matter so many several Vows. And those parts which are of things lawful and necessary, do not rise from, nor depend upon those parts that are objected to be unlawful, but stand intire by their own force and valour. Now the question is, Whether those parts, which are of things lawful and necessary, can be made void by the conjunction of those other parts objected to be unlawful?

The obligation of this Covenant cannot cease by the mutual consent of the Covenanters; because it was not solely or chiefly a league between men, but chiefly an Oath or Vow to God of things to be performed towards him; and the Union and Association of men therein, was in vowing to God, who was the party chiefly intended in it.

Tho a Vow of things in themselves arbitrary, being made by such as are under the power of another, may be disannulled by him under whose power they are; yet it is not so in Vows of those things that are duties antecedently.

To be obliged by this Covenant to endeavour alteration of Government in the Church, so far as that alteration is just and necessary to be made, is against no due of obedience to Governours, no just rights of Superiours, or any persons whatsoever.

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This Covenant cannot oblige to any such endeavour of alteration, as includes the determining of matters of publick Government against the Law and mind of the Sovereign. It is only an endeavour of a just and necessary alteration by lawful ways and means, which is here taken into consideration.

Several things of moment in the Ecclesiastical Government may need Reformation, tho the Episcopacy remain as it was received in the ancient Church.

It is an ordinary and necessary practice to make an alteration of Laws, and so of Government, both in Civil and Ecclesiastical matters, from time to time, so far as need requires.

I freely declare, That there lies no obligation from this Covenant upon any person to endeavour any alteration of Government in Church or State by Rebellion, Sedition, or any other unlawful means.

There lies no obligation from this Covenant upon any person to endeavour by any means, any such alteration of Government in Church or State, as may not lawfully be made by the authority of King and Parliament, nor be endeavoured by others in subordination to the said Authority.

I consent to the Episcopacy that was of ancient Ecclesiastical custom, as in the times of *Ignatius, Tertullian, or Cyprian*.

I consent to Bishop *Usher's* Model of Government by Bishops, and Archbishops, with their Presbyters, which was presented to his Majesty by the Divines called *Presbyterian*, for a ground-work of accommodation.

I am willing to exercise the Ministry under the present Ecclesiastical Government, and to promise obedience to the Ordinary in things lawful and honest, if there were a relaxation about some injunctions, which I scruple; or if the grounds of my scruples about them were removed.

I am ready to engage, not to disturb the peace of the Church, and not to endeavour any point of alteration in its Government, by *Rebellious, Seditious, or any unlawful ways*.

I am ready to engage also, That I will not any way endeavour any point of alteration to be made in the Government of the Church, otherwise than by authority of King, of Parliament.

Yea, for my own part, I could willingly engage, That I will not any way endeavour a change of Church Government from Episcopall to Presbyterian. The ancient conjunction of Episcopacy

with Presbytrej, is that which I wish might be restored to the Church.

Some have argued, that the renouncing of the obligation of the Covenant, is to be taken in a restrained sense, *viz.* That there lies no obligation from this Covenant, by Seditious, Factionous, Turbulent and Tumultuous ways, to disturb the publick Peace and Government now Established in Church or State.

*Ans.* 1. It is hard to warrant this restrained sense of the Declaration, by sufficient proof, or good authority.

2. When we intend to declare the non obligation of an Oath or Vow, only in a limited sense; it is not safe to declare it in such words as express its non-obligation in any sense whatsoever. Both the taking and renouncing of an Oath, had need be done in words of unexceptionable clearness, at least in such words as are not liable to great exception. Not only the thing intended by an Oath, but the expression thereof, had need be warrantable.

3. This Covenant hath been so handled, and the form of the renunciation is so expressed, as that one would easily think, that the Law-makers intended an utter renouncing of all manner of obligation from it.

## Of Divine Worship, in three Parts.

*The First, Of the Nature, Kinds, Parts, and Adjuncts of Divine Worship. The Second, Of Idolatry. The Third, Of Superstition less than Idolatry.*

**T**O make diligent search into the nature of Divine Worship, I have judg'd my self concern'd, as a Christian, and a Minister, and a Sufferer for conscientious dissent and doubtings about some points thereof injoyed by Authority: Some Delineation of what I discern in this important matter, by the assistance of Divine Grace in reading and thinking, I have here drawn in a narrow compass. And I have done it to the intent, that I might have a Scheme of my thoughts herein, at hand, and ready for view, to be rectified where it is wrong, and to be further improved where it is right; and more readily managed as cause requires; likewise, that from others, who will do me the favour to peruse and consider it, I may have help for a better or clearer knowledge of these points. For I know my great defectiveness in this knowledge, and am an humble seeker of more clearness and exactness therein; yet I am not dubious in the main heads. In the body of an Animal, the greater veins are more easily discernable in their whole System; the smaller, with more difficulty; and the smallest are almost imperceptible. So in Theology, the large veins of the greatest and most important truths, are very visible and palpable; but the smaller branches thereof may not be easily discern'd, and are not traced in their several passages, without attentive and accurate investigation. It behoves every one to do his best, for as perfect understanding in matters of his own Function and Practice, as he can reach unto. But when we have done all, we know but in part,

and see darkly as in a glass: The sense whereof should dispose men of different judgments to that considerateness and sobriety, which will cause, that the one neither despise nor judge the other, but that all receive one another with mutual charity.

## The First Part:

### § 1. Of Worship in General.

**A**S touching Worship in general, its Nature is by some set forth, to be an observance yielded to others, according to their excellency of Worthiness. And in this largeness, it seems the same with giving honour, and so it is due not only to Superiors, but to equals and inferiors, for any Worthiness, Natural, Moral, or Political, that is in them, according to the Apostles Precept, *Honour all men.*

But by others, the notion of Worship is made (and I think rightly) narrower than that of Honour, viz. a respect not merely to anothers worth or excellence, but to his Superiority and Power over us, whether Natural, Civil, or Ecclesiastical, and such an observance of him, as implies Subjection.

The highest kind of Worship, is that which is due to the highest Excellency and Sovereignty, and is called Divine Worship.

### § 2. Of Divine Worship in its more comprehensive Sense.

**T**O Worship God, is to yield him that observance which is his due, and his alone, according to his incommunicable Excellence, and Sovereignty over us, and his other transcendent Relations to us.

Our observance due to God alone, is our voluntary act of absolute or unlimited subjection, and whatsoever is expressive thereof. All Divine Worship herein consisting, must needs be for nature or kind, the highest that can be rendered; yet there are several parts or kinds thereof, that differ in the degrees of partaking



taking of the nature of this kind. Some partake thereof in a more noble and eminent, and others in an inferior way; and these are appendent and subservient to the former.

Every Act of obedience to God, taken formally, is Divine Worship in a larger sense; for every such act considered formally, as obedience, is a direct rendering of that observance or honour to him, which is his due. Consequently, Devotion towards God incompasseth the whole duty of man; for mans whole duty is of no larger extent than observance due to God.

But those Acts which are the matter of our observance towards God, yet nextly and immediately respect our neighbour, or our selves; being materially and in themselves considered, are not directly Religious or Divine Worship, but reductively, as being imperated by Religion.

§ 3. *Of Divine Worship in the stricter or narrower sense, and which is specially here intended.*

THE Worshipping of God is the direct acknowledging of his being, and perfections, and sovereignty over us, &c. to his honour. Consequently, it is the yielding of such honour to God, as no other being is capable of, because his being and perfections, and supreminent Relations, are incommunicable to any other.

Wherefore it is no fit Question, because no matter of debate, Whether Divine Worship may be given to a Creature? But the question concerning Worship given by some to a Creature, is, Whether it be Divine Worship, or that which belongs to God, or no? And if it be found to be that which belongs to God, it is evident without more ado, that it cannot be given to a Creature. For Gods Worship is communicable, no more than his excellency is.

But to the question as ordinarily express'd, Whether Religious Worship may be given to a Creature? The answer is made, by distinguishing Religious Worship into the elicit, or imperative Acts of Religion. That Religious Worship in the latter sense may be given to men, is past doubt. For all due Civil Worship is imperated by Religion: but the elicit Acts of Religion, being acts of Devotion due to God, as God, cannot be rendered.

rendred to any Creature, nor any outward and imperate Act, immediately expressive thereof.

§ 4. *Divine Worship distinguished into internal and external.*

**A**LL kind of Worship, and consequently the Worship of God, is divided into internal and external, according to the essential parts of man, internal and external, the Soul and the Body.

The internal Worship of God, is an Act of the Mind or Soul, whereby, according to the apprehension of his worthiness, it entertains a worthy estimation of him, and hath complacence in him, and consents to the due expressions thereof.

Hence it is evident, that the inmost and deepest part of Gods Worship, is a superlative reverence and love of him.

The external Worship of God, is the direct and immediate expression of the internal, by any outward Sign, Word, Gesture, Action.

The internal is to the external, what the Soul is to the Body; yea, it may be compleat Worship of it self, as when the outward expressions cannot be performed, or are not requisite.

The external without the internal, is a carcass without life. Nevertheless it is an Observance, or Worship, and hath its moral Estimation, or comes to account.

§ 5. *Divine Worship distinguished into Natural and Instituted. And first, of Natural Worship.*

**T**HE Worship of God is either natural or instituted. Natural Worship is that which in *specie*, and immediately, is founded in the Nature of God, and the Nature of man, and Gods relation to Man, and Mans relation to God.

And it is twofold, either that which is naturally necessary, or that which is naturally laudable. That which is naturally necessary, is indispenfable and unchangeable. That which is naturally laudable must be used whensoever conveniently it may.

There is natural Worship due to God, both as the Creator of man, and as the Redeemer of fallen man.

As God is our Creator, he is our absolute Owner, and Ruler, and Benefactor; and as such, he is to be acknowledged by us, with

all due observance. And whatsoever Acts of observance towards God we are upon this ground immediately obliged unto, they are Natural Worship due to God as our Creator.

All Natural Worship due to God as Creator, is discernable by natural revelation, or the Book of Nature. In Nature intire, it was clearly and compleatly thereby discernable; but in Nature fallen, more dimly and defectively; yet not for want of objective evidence, but for the indisposition of our faculty.

Likewise to God our Redeemer, there is a Worship due from us, naturally and immediately arising from our redemption, and our relation to God therein founded. And it is (our redemption being supposed) no more of Gods arbitrary institution, than that Worship which is founded in the Law of our Creation, and primitive State.

To the knowledg of this sort of Natural Worship, we come by means of that Divine revelation, by which we come to the knowledg of our redeemed state. But the knowledg of our redeemed state being supposed, natural Reason will shew, that such and such Acts of observance in *specie* are naturally and indispensably due to God our Redeemer.

#### § 6. Of Divine instituted Worship.

**I**Nstituted Worship is that which depends in *specie*, and immediately upon Gods free Will, and Arbitrary institution. But the institution being made and continuing, it is naturally and necessarily due to God, so far as he requires it, tho it be not immediately natural. For our natural and unchangeable relation to God, necessarily and perpetually obliges us to whatsoever God hath appointed, so far, and so long as he hath appointed it.

#### § 7. Of Moral and Ceremonial Worship.

**T**HIS distinction being commonly used, must here be taken notice of. It is wholly coincident with the former. For that which is commonly called Moral, is for the most part, but not all of it, natural Worship; nor perhaps is all natural Worship to be called Moral; for there may be some natural Ceremonies, that is to say, naturally laudable, tho not absolutely necessary. Nor

is all instituted Worship Ceremonial, but some is Moral, as observing of the weekly Sabbath, or *Lords day*. Nor is all Ceremonial worship instituted. For besides natural ceremonies, other ceremonious religious Acts may be used arbitrarily and occasionally, and but once; indeed such Acts may be called instituted, as Instituted is opposed to Natural, but not as it betokens stated or settled.

The word Moral is ambiguous, and, as I suppose, inconveniently used in this matter; as it also is, when used in distinguishing the divine Law into Moral and Ceremonial. For every Law is Moral, or *circa moris*; and all Worship is Moral, as being an Act of our behaviour conformable to the divine Law. Nevertheless we must yield to use, which hath the dominion of words, and inquire into the meaning of this word in this point.

Sometimes the word in this case is taken by them that use it, for that which is of perpetual right. But that this is not the adequate sense, appears, for that some things not ceremonial, but esteemed moral, are not perpetual. And there is a common distinction between Moral natural, and Moral positive; and that Moral positive is not in the nature of the thing perpetual, is unquestionable; and it is evident, that some Moral positive is not *de facto* of perpetual right, as the old Seventh-day Sabbath; Concerning which day, tho there might be something ceremonial in the corporal rest thereof, especially under the *Mosaical* dispensation; yet the observing of that measure of time, and that special day every week set a part for Gods solemn Worship, was not ceremonial, nor yet natural, but Moral positive, yet not perpetual. Besides, there is nothing in the nature of the thing to hinder the perpetuity of some ceremonial Law or Worship, if it pleased God to perpetuate it. Yea, there are some ceremonial Ordinances of Divine Worship now instituted, that are to indure to the Consummation of all things, namely, the two Sacraments of the *New Testament*.

The best distinguishing-terms that I can find to express what is generally meant by Moral and Ceremonial Worship, is, That the former is substantial, and by it self Divine Worship; the later is but a supplemental as an appurtenance to the former, the better to express it, and set it off, and externally to compleat it. I suppose the term *Complemental* might here fitly enough be used, but that it sounds ill from the sense which it hath in com-

mon use. And meer ceremonial persons do indeed but complement with God, according to the common meaning of that word.

The ceremonial Worship be but supplemental to that which is called Moral and Substantial; yet being appointed of God, it is not to be lightly esteemed, but to be valued according to its importance. And there be some parts or kinds thereof, that are of high importance in Religion, as the Sacraments and Sacrifices under the the *Old Testament*, and the Sacraments of the *New-Testament*.

§ 8. *The parts of Worship distinguished from the adjuncts or accidents thereof.*

**W**ORSHIP may be considered both as a generical, and as an integral whole, and accordingly it hath specific and integral parts. Every specific part or kind thereof, hath in it the common name and nature of the genus. And every integral part of the same species is homogenial, and hath the name and nature of that species. And the specifically different parts may be considered as integral parts, and heterogenial, that go to the making up of one intire Divine Service.

It imports much to discern and distinguish rightly between Worship it self, and the accidents thereof, without which it is not performable, or at least not performable in due manner; such as are, order, method, phrase, or form of words, degree, frequency, time, place, furniture.

These things appertain to Divine Worship, not in any peculiar reason, but in common, as to all grave, civil or humane actions.

Nor do these things immediately and directly respect God and his Honour, to whom the Worship is directed; but Man and his convenience, by whom the Worship is performed.

Nevertheless God and his Honour is concerned in them, in as much as he is concerned that men be set in all convenient circumstances for his Worship, and therefore ultimately they respect him, and they are to be used for the hallowing of his name.

I take not this to be any constitutive, or consecutive difference between the Worship it self, and its adjuncts, that the

one makes acceptable to God, and is a means of Grace from him, and the other not. For I conceive both the one and the other may have this effect, tho not in equal degree.

The Ceremonial Worship be but an appurtenance of that which is called Moral; yet it is truly a species of Worship, as having the common nature of Worship in it. Howbeit, it is but an Analogical species, as having the nature of its genus, but in an inferior way.

*§. 9. Of those acts of Religion that are Moral Natural Worship.*

THE acts of Religion that are Moral Natural Worship, are the hearing of Gods word with heart-subjection; prayer, comprehending confession of our sin and misery; petition for all needful grace and mercy; and praise, with thanksgiving; self-reignation to God, and covenanting with him; making vows to him; swearing by his name; and devoting any thing to his immediate Service. All these are expressions of divine honour.

Of all these there may be certain external forms of positive institution, and so as to those forms they may be called instituted worship.

Moreover the thing vowed may be instituted and ceremonial, tho the vow of it self be Moral Worship.

The end of an Oath may be the confirmation of the truth unto men; and the nearest end of a Vow to God, may be some benefit to men; and the matter of a Vow may be some common thing; yet the Vow, as to its essential form, is divine Worship in a direct engagement made to God for his honour; and an oath as to its essential form, is divine worship in a direct acknowledging of Gods Omnipotence, Omniscience, infinite Holiness, and taking him to witness to the truth which we attest, with a voluntary subjection to his righteous judgment. And the internal end of both Vow and Oath, is the glorifying of God as our Supreme Lord and Judg.

The external part of the Sacraments both of the Old and New Testament, is instituted ceremonial worship; but the internal part, which is the soul and spirit thereof, being our solemn receiving of the grace of the Covenant given us of God in Christ, and our solemn engaging to God according to the tenor of that Covenant, is a most important and main part of divine service, and is worship Moral, Natural.



§ 10. *Of particular acts which are Natural Cerimonial Worship.*

**K**neeling, bowing of the body, prostration, lifting up of the hands and eyes to heaven in worshipping God, are in one respect worship it self, and in another respect but circumstances of Worship. They are acts of external Worship as they are natural expressions of the internal. And they may be accounted and called circumstances of Worship, being considered as subservient appurtenances to the more substantial parts of Worship, to which they are sometimes necessarily conjoined, and from which remaining intire and compleat notwithstanding, they may at other times be spared. These things being naturally laudable, but not naturally necessary, are necessary to be used when conveniently they may, and not otherwise.

Some have called the aforesaid, and such like external acts, natural Ceremonies; and they are called Natural, because Nature it self teacheth men to use them, without any Divine or Humane institution; and a rational man by the meer light of Nature, is directed to use them; yet men are by nature directed to things not without government of counsel and discretion. For in these things Nature is in part determined and limited by the custom of several Ages and Countreys, and by the difference of several cases.

The posture of Standing in the acts of solemn professions and engagements made to God, as in declaring our assent to the Articles of the Christian Faith, and consent to the Covenant of Grace; also in acts of solemn Praise and Thanksgiving, as in the repeating of Laudatory Hymns, is such an outward expression of our internal devotion, as is very consentaneous to Nature, and so an outward act of Worship.

§ 11. *Of External acts which by custom of the Age or Countrey express devotion in Worship.*

**M**EN say, That Custom is a second Nature. And some external acts that are grounded on Custom, are as significant and expressive, at least before men, as those that are natural; and the neglect of them would be very incongruous and scandalous.

Of this kind is the uncovering of the head in the Male Sex, by putting off the Hat, &c. and in the Worship of God it is an act or part of worship; for it is done directly to his honour, and is immediately expressive of heart reverence towards him.

Yet I grant that all reverential acts about Gods Worship, are not acts of worship, but some are only adjuncts thereof, as shall be shewed.

No Ceremonial act, either natural or customary, is necessary to be observed, where natural infirmity, or other necessity, makes it inconvenient.

§. 12. *Of External acts, which by divine Institution, or the general custom of Nations, express Divine Honour.*

**T**HE erecting of Altars, offering of Sacrifice, and burning of incense, are by the custom of mankind accounted Divine Honours. And they were such acknowledgments as God did in the Law appropriate to himself. Therefore these acts are properly divine worship to whatsoever object they are directed. Yea, tho there be not an intencion of acknowledging a Deity in the object or person to whom they are directed; yet they are external Divine Worship, or a giving of that external honour which is appropriated to the Deity.

The dedicating of Temples, and consecrating of places to any being, may be of ambiguous interpretation. First, it may betoken the setting apart a place as sacred to that being, to which it is set apart, and the place of its worship, and special residence, and benign influence upon mortals; and in this sense it is an act of divine worship; and in this sense I suppose the Papiſts have dedicated Churches and Chappels, and other places, to Saints and Angels. 2. It may betoken only the setting apart of a place or house in memorial only of the created person, Saint or Angel, but to the honour and service of God. And in this later sense the dedicating of a Church or other place to a created being, is not a deferring of divine honour thereunto.

In like manner the dedicating of days and times to any person for invocation, or any service which is usually rendred to God, to be performed to that person, is a giving of divine worship to him. But the dedicating of days and times in memorial of some blessed person, to the honour and service of God alone, is no giving of divine worship to that person.

§ 13. *Of fasting, wearing of Sackcloth, or other vile apparel, lying in ashes, being barefoot, and the like austerities used in Gods Worship.*

1. **T**Hese acts are evident expressions of Humiliation and Self-abasement; and some of them are fit expressions thereof in all places and times, as fasting, and wearing of mean apparel; and some of them but in some Ages and Countries, because, tho they are apt in nature to express the same, yet therein nature is subject to some variety according to the different customs of times and places. 2<sup>ly</sup>. They are fit means of mortification, some of them in all times and places, as fasting; some of them only in some times and places according to custom. 3<sup>ly</sup>. Consequently they are fit adjuncts of Divine Worship in special seasons and occasions of solemn Humiliation.

But 4<sup>ly</sup>. These acts may become also acts of Divine Worship (whether they be lawful acts thereof is another Question), being used as direct means of honouring and pleasing God in abasing and displeasing self: For so they are done before his Foot-stool to the exalting of his name in our abject and forlorn state and posture. And the Scripture expressly takes notice of a kind of Will-Worship in a certain voluntary abasement, and neglect of the body, Col. 2. 23.

§ 14. *The nature of Monastick Vows of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity, considered.*

**T**Hat the *formale* of these Vows, as of all others, is Divine Worship, is not doubted; the inquiry therefore is of the subject matter thereof.

By the matter of these Vows the asserters thereof intend a special religious state over and above the general religious state, which is Christianity it self; which special state contains an obligation to certain offices and works to be done, intended for the direct and immediate honouring and serving of God, and that in a more sublime and perfect way than Christianity in general; and so they are made direct matter of devotion or Worship.

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But the matter of those Vows may be so intended and managed, as to be religious only reductively, as being for the advancement of Religion, namely, for vacancy to holy exercises, for more Freedom in the Christian warfare, upon which account *Calibate* or single life was commended by *St. Paul*; not that he commended the Vow thereof, but a constant purpose thereof for those ends, in case of the gift or power to continue therein. Now whether they be fit matter of Vows in this later sense, is afterwards to be considered. The like may be said of abstinence, as of *Calibate*.

§ 15. Of Decency and Order, adjuncts of Divine Worship.

THE Apostles rule, *Let all things be done decently and in order*, is of the law of nature, and would have obliged the Churches of Christ, tho it had not been written in the Holy Scripture.

Decency as such, is no part of Worship, but an adjunct; it is the convenient setting it off, or a mode thereof agreeable to its dignity. And it is not proper to it alone, but common to all Civil matters and Humane actions of a grave nature, viz. that it be performed in a meet habit, and posture of Body, and Furniture, and other like significations of due respect to a holy action.

Order likewise is an adjunct of Worship, and is not to be extended to the making of new Worship; for that it is no other than the due disposing of what is already made, and the convenient setting and ranking of the several parts thereof, for Method, Measure, Time, Place, and other circumstances. And it belongs to Divine Worship, not on a peculiar, but common reason, as to all humane actions, wherein order is both beautiful and advantageous, and disorder is deformed and prejudicial.

The Apostles said Rule, intends that necessary Decency and Order, the want whereof is undecency and disorder; but not Gaudy dresses, Theatrical ornaments, Pompous formalities, Imagery, and Various flourishes, affected by the sensual fancy. Such Decency is enjoined as is suitable to things of a holy and reverend Nature.

We may know what is enjoined in a Law, by what is therein forbidden. Now in this Law nothing is forbidden, but undecency and disorder; and therefore nothing is enjoined but the necessary Decency and Order opposite thereunto. And in plain reason, whatsoever is not undecent, is decent; and whatsoever is not disorderly, is orderly; I mean in a capable subject of these adjuncts.

Most Matters of Decency and Order, are simply necessary only *in genere*, but not *in specie* any further, but that some species or other under the genus is to be made use of according to prudence.

Some particular species of Decency are in themselves necessary when they are possible; and they are those whose opposites are undecent from the nature of the things. Some are necessary from extrinsecal circumstances, as from custome of the Time and Place, the Quality and Condition of persons, &c. The former kind may be called Natural, the later Civil or Customary. And the later sort are necessary even by the Law of Nature, yet not immediately, but mediately, such circumstances being supposed. But this sort admits of much variety and alteration.

Less decent hath the nature of undecent, when it is chosen in opposition to more decent; as less good hath the nature of evil, when it is chosen in opposition to greater good. But here it is not fit nor safe to contend about *magis* and *minus*, nor to strain to the uttermost pitch in things that are matter of Contrivance, or Scruple, or Jealousie; but it is best to take up with that which is most passable among all, provided there be no simple undecency: For then in that case no necessary Decency is neglected.

§ 16. *Of Time and Place considered as Adjuncts, or as matter of Worship.*

**T**IME and Place in general are necessary Adjuncts or Circumstances of Divine Worship. For no action Natural or Moral, can be performed without them. And they are meer Adjuncts, when they attend Divine Worship in a way and reason common to it with other humane Actions, and are appointed and used about it, according to convenience for the due performance of it. And then they are only for the Worship performed.

formed therein, but the Worship is not from them.

But Time and Place in Gods Worship sometimes have a higher state, and become the matter thereof, as the old Sabbath, and the Lords day, and the Tabernacle, and Temple, under the *Mosaical* dispensation. For as God by his Institution did make those Times and Places not occasionally but statedly holy, and a means of sanctifying his people; so his people in their submission to his appointment, and their very Dedication and Observation or Sanctifying of those Times and Places, did perform special Acts of Worship, being an Oblation to God, and an immediate giving of honour to him. And those Times and Places were not only sanctified by the duties therein performed, but the duties were partly sanctified, and made acceptable by those Times and Places.

Howbeit those sacred Times and Places, that have been advanced to be matter of Worship, are also in that state of advancement Adjuncts to that Worship to which they appertain, and are appropriated. For there is that inferiority and superiority in several parts of Worship, that some may be rightly accounted adjuncts to others.

As God by his Institution can make Times and Places, that of themselves are but meer Adjuncts, to be matter of his Worship, and hath done it in the forementioned instances; so men also may by their Institutions make Times and Places statedly or permanently Holy, and matter of Worship, and an Oblation to God. How lawfully they may do so, is afterwards to be considered; but however the dedicating and observing thereof hath the Nature of Worship in it. For the efficient cause, Whether it be God or Man, is extrinsecal to the formal nature of Worship, which lies in the formal Reason, and direct and proper end and use of the action, by whomsoever instituted.

Here it may be considered, Whether every Adjunct of Worship instituted of God, doth by that Institution become a matter or part of Worship, which otherwise it would not be. Some say that in the old Law, the least ceremony prescribed of God, was a part of Worship. Which Assertion I do not now so far examine, as to declare my assent or dissent. But if it were so, I think it was not merely as prescribed of God, but upon some further Reason. For I do not see that God cannot prescribe a  
meer



meer adjunct of Worship, but it must thereby lose its formal state, or become formally another thing, viz. a matter of Worship; but think it may remain in its own state, a meer Adjunct still. Nevertheless, the observation of that divinely prescribed Adjunct, may be an act of Worship so far, as every act of obedience to God as such, may be so called. But here we speak of Worship, not in so large, but in the stricter sense.

§ 17. *Of sacred Signs, and significant Ceremonies in Divine Worship.*

**A** Sign is something more known, shewing another thing less known; or that which is more open, discovering something more latent; or at least, that which doth further clear and confirm the truth of what is alike evident.

There are Signs natural, and customary, and instituted, and arbitrary, and stated, and occasional.

As things signified, so Signs are either Sacred, or Common. And as of all other things, so there may be Signs of Worship.

And Signs immediately expressive of Worship, are Worship. For all external worship, is a sign of the internal; whether it be true, or feigned. And Ceremonies that signify, or express an act of Worship, are ceremonial Worship.

But all significant Ceremonies are not Worship, because they do not all signify, or express an act of Worship.

Among significant Ceremonies, that are parts of Worship, I reckon the Cross in Baptism, being confessedly a sign of our dedication to Christ.

§ 18. *Of the nature of being holy, and the distinctions of holiness.*

**H**oliness in Creatures signifies, either a quality in Angels and Men, which is called the Image of God; or the relation of any thing to God, as appropriated to him.

In a general sence, all things in heaven and earth are the Lords: but whatsoever is his in a special sence, or separated to his use, is called holy: As first, persons, either more generally devoted to him, and that heartily, as all the faithful and their seed; or professedly, as all visible Christians; or else, by

Special Office, as the Priests of old, and now the Ministers of the Gospel. 2<sup>d</sup>. Things, some by his own immediate Command; others by general directions to Men: and of these, some are more remotely, others more nearly set apart unto him. Things more nearly, or strictly devoted to God, are Temples, Utensils, Lands, &c. which are Holy, being justly related to God by lawful Separation. Ministers are more holy than these, because more nearly related to God. Things remotely, or more at large devoted to God, are the Meat, Drink, House, Lands, Labours, Offices, &c. of every one that is godly, who with himself devotes all that he hath to God.

Indeed, as every thing is sanctified of God to a Believer, so every thing is sanctified by a Believer unto God. But the holiness of things is ordinarily understood, of things not remotely, and at large, and ultimately; but more nearly, and in a stricter sense devoted to God.

Some say, such a state of Separation to holy uses, that the thing may no more be alienated, is proper holiness. But others think this too narrow a description. For there may be a temporary Separation, as well as perpetual to holy uses, as here strictly taken for those onely that more nearly respect God's Worship and Service; and not for all uses, ultimately respecting God's Honour; in which larger sense, by the Holy, all things (as hath been said) are used to holy uses. Some say, That those things are not sacred, that accompany Religious Worship in a way common to it with other things, as Time, Place, Furniture, &c. Things used in Religious Services, may be civil in their own Nature, and they do not then alter their Matter, or Form, but onely their Subject, to which they are Adjuncts. To which it is answered, That things considered in their own nature, that is, Physically, are neither civil nor sacred, but are either the one or the other, according to their relation and application. Therefore many things, of the same species Physically considered, may be sometimes Civil, and sometimes Sacred, according to their different use and relation, as the same Physical act that is but civil reverence in a civil affair, may be religious reverence in a religious Service. They accompany Religion in a way common to it, with other actions, Physically, but not Morally, or Relatively. And whereas it is said, they are of the same use out of God's service, as in it; as there is

the same use of mens eyes in reading one Book, as in reading another: The Answer is, They are of the same use Physically, but not Relatively, and Morally.

For explaining the former Paragraph, be it noted, That Religion presupposeth civility, and consequently holy things and actions require civil things and actions as inferior attendants thereon. Religious Worship, or Divine Service, must needs be accompanied with many things of a meer civil import, which do not thereupon alter their state from civil to sacred; as the civil Habits both of Ministers, and People, the civil order of their sitting according to their several ranks; and other civil decencies observed in holy Assemblies, that still remain but meer civilities. For they are not applied, nor related to Religion as adjuncts to a Subject; nor are referred to a holy use, or end; otherwise then as all things are referred ultimately to a holy end: onely they are requisite to accompany Religion in their lower state of Civility. Nevertheless there be many things, which in civil affairs are meerly civil, yet in Religious Exercises are Religious, their Relative state being altered, for that they are directly applied to a religious or holy use and end; as bowing of the Body, lifting up the Hand, or the Eyes, standing up, being Physically the same, are Sacred actions, being applied to Divine worship; and civil, when applied to civil respects.

Every thing should be revered according to the Degree and Measure of its Holiness.

## The Second Part of Idolatry.

### § 1. Of Superstition in general.

**A**S there is a defect in Religion, so there is an excess, and this is called Superstition.

This excess is not in the formal reason of Religion (for we cannot too much observe, reverence, and love God) but

either in the undueness of the object, or the acts thereof, Internal, or External. Excess in the undueness of the object of Religious Worship, is Idolatry. Excess in the Internal acts thereof, lies in the inward anxiety, scrupulosity, or other exorbitant fancy about it.

The Excess in the External acts, is either in the Kind, or the Measure thereof; in the Kind, as being forbidden either in particular, or in general; in the measure, of what for the Kind is lawful, as when it is to the neglect of other duties.

The Excess is more rare in natural, than in instituted, or positive Worship.

To be too religious, is in some respect to be irreligious; it is sometimes Sacrilegious, in robbing God of his due in other kinds; and at all times it wants the formal nature of True Religion.

Superstition is either positive, in forbidden acts of Worship; or negative, in religious abstinings from things not forbidden, as some distinguish. But I conceive, that in this latter kind the *formale* of Superstition lyes not in a negation, or meer not doing, but in a certain observance about not doing, and a conscientious nollition.

## § 2. Of Idolatry in general.

**I**dolatry is a species of Superstition, being an excess in the object of Worship. It is the giving of Worship, that is proper to God, to that which is not God.

An Idol in its most proper sence, is an Image, that is the likeness or resemblance of any Being; more especially, that which is made for the resemblance of the true, or a false God. It also signifies, whatsoever Being, visible, or invisible, yea or figment of the brain, that is worshipped as God.

Moreover, an Idol is not onely that, which besides the true God is avowed for God; but also that, which hath any part or kind of Divine Honour given to it; for it is thereby made *interpretative* another God.

If any incommunicable Attribute of God be given to another, as Omniscience, or to be the searcher of hearts, that other is made another God, though not simply, yet *as if* or so far.

Idolatry may be committed by such as own no more gods than the onely living and true God; for though they do not acknowledge more Gods than one, yet they may give his incommunicable honour to that which they confesse to be no God.

To pray to any Creature for that benefit, which God onely can do for us, as to give Rain, or fair Weather, is Divine Worship and Idolatry.

### §. 3. Of *Latria* and *Dulia*.

**A**S for the famous distinction of *λατρεία* and *δουλεία*, we will consider it first according to the Words, then according to the Sense that is given thereof by those that use it.

As for the words; *λατρεία* is not used onely for worship given to God, *Deut.* 28. 48. *Levit.* 23. 7. Nor is *δουλεία* used onely for worship given to Creatures, *Acts* 20. 19. *Rom.* 12. 11. *1 Thef.* 1. 9. *Latria* is a Word that generally signifies all Service; and *dulia* signifies Service in a stricter way; to wit, of those that are not *sui juris*, but absolutely at the disposing of him whom they serve.

As for the sense of this distinction given by the Users; *Latria* is that worship whereby the object is acknowledged to be the first beginning, and the ultimate end of all: and *dulia* is that wherein the object is not acknowledged so to be.

This their way of distinguishing, doth not make two kinds of worship, either in the outward acts, which are the same in *latria* and *dulia*, even among the *Papists*, except Sacrifice onely; or in the Internal acts of the Will; to wit, Love, Fear, Trust, &c. which may be the same in both, and through Superstition may be greater in their *dulia* than *latria*; but onely in an intellectual apprehension, which the vulgar are not apt to mind.

Moreover, when the object is not apprehended to be the first Cause, and last End; that is, the Supreme God, nothing hinders, but it may have that kind of Worship given to it, which is due to him onely; as to Pray to it, to Swear by it, to burn Incense, to dedicate Temples and Altars, and to make Vows to it.

The Worship which *Cornelius* was about to give to *Peter*, and which



which *John* was about to give to the Angel, from a transport of Mind, was more than was due to Creatures: yet *Corinelius* did not think *Peter*, nor *John* the Angel, to be the first Cause, and last End. Nor did the Devil move our Saviour so to acknowledge him, when he would have had him fall down and Worship him; yet he rejected his motion, as seeking the worship due to God onely; yea, and that which is called *κατὰ φύσιν*, *Luk. 4. 8.*

#### §. 4. Of Idolatry, serious and dissembled.

SERIOUS Idolatry is, when the mind gives the honour due to God, or any part thereof, to a Being that is not God; and when the using of the External signs of that honour proceeds from the intention of the mind to honour it thereby.

In all serious or undissembled Idolatry, there is ignorance or error about the object, or the act of Worship. First, about the object; either the thing worshipped is taken to be God, when it is not God; or it is taken to have some Attribute of God, which it hath not, or to enjoy some Prerogative of God, which it doth not. In the Two later cases the thing is worshipped, though not simply, yet *κατὰ φύσιν* as God. Secondly, About the act of Worship, 1. When the worship given to that which is not God, is not taken to be Divine Worship, when indeed it is such. 2. When the Worship taken to be Divine, is not taken to be applied to the object, when indeed it is applied.

Dissembled Idolatry, is meerly External, when an External Sign of Honour due to God alone is given to that, which is not God, without the intention of the mind to honour it thereby.

Every outward act, that is ordinarily used for signification of Divine Honour, is not of it self, as Physically considered, a signification thereof, and consequently not Idolatry. But whensoever such an act is knowingly and voluntarily done, at such time and place, and in such circumstances as make it to be taken for a signification of Divine Honour, it is imputed to him that doth it for a signification thereof. Though it be true, That that which is not a sign of Internal Honour, is not Worship; nevertheless, he that doth not internally honour, may give



give the outward sign of doing it. He doth really give the sign of such honour, though but a feigned one, and so is really guilty of Idolatry, though but dissembled. He doth really make shew of giving that honour to another, which is due to God onely, and professedly owns another object of Divine worship, and so far an other God. And though it be not Mental, yet it is Corporal Idolatry, as an *Atheist* or impious person doth not Internally Honour God, but condemn him; yet doing those things which are External Signs thereof, he doth Externally worship God.

§. 5. Of adoration given to the Host.

**T**HAT the *Papists* give Divine Worship to the Host, is by themselves acknowledged; and it is no small part of their Religion. The Council of Trent determines, *That the same Divine Worship which we give to God himself, is to be given to the most Holy Sacrament.* And by the Holy Sacrament, they mean the Body of Christ under the accidents of the Bread.

This, according to the Protestants Doctrine, is the giving of Divine Honour to a morsel of Bread; and therefore a most stupid, and stupendious kind of Idolatry.

Some of the *Protestant* Profession have gone about to Extenuate the same, saying, That it is material, but not formal Idolatry in the *Papists*. For that the Consecrated Bread is taken to be very Christ, who is very God; and therefore, though the thing Worshipped be not God, yet it is Believed to be the True God by those Worshipers, and Worshipped as such.

Nevertheless, it hath been granted by some of the *Papish* Writers, That if the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* be an Error, they are guilty of the most abominable Idolatry in the Adoration of the Host; and they could not find out the afore-said extenuation of it, in case of such Error, by distinguishing between Material and Formal Idolatry.

And some *Romanists* do say, That these words, *This is my body*, may bear a Figurative sense; as those Words, *That Christ was a Rock*: and that if there were no other Evidence for *Transubstantiation*, but what the Scripture gives, there were no reason to make it an Article of Faith. *Bellarmino* saith, *These words necessarily infer either a real Mutation in the Bread, as the Catho-*  
licks

*icks bold; or a Metaphorical, as the Calvinists hold; but by no means admit the Lutheran sence.* And he concludes, That though there be some obscurity and ambiguity in the Words, yet it is taken away by Councils and Fathers.

The *Persians*, in old Gentilism, Worshipped the *Sun* for the Supreme God; and their Idolatry was not the less abominable for their Error about that Object of Worship. And surely it was Formal Idolatry; that is, There was in it the *formalis ratio*, or true nature and reason of that Sin.

Nay, I think it more Sacrilegious, and Blasphemous against the True God, to take any Creature to be he, and to worship it accordingly, than to give Divine Worship to a Creature not imagined to be the Supreme God, but some inferior deity.

St. *Austin* speaks in his Preface to his Sermon on *Psal. 93.* of certain Hereticks that honoured the *Sun*, and said, *That it was Jesus Christ.* Now divine honour given to the *Sun* under such a mistake, is horrid Idolatry; and why not also divine honour given to a morsel of Bread by the same mistake?

The *Lutherans* Doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, doth not infer that the *Eucharist* is to be adored. They believe indeed, *That Jesus Christ is really present in the Sacrament*; but they do not believe, That the Sacrament is really Jesus Christ, nor adore it as such.

But that the *Papists* condition in respect of this sottish Superstition of Bread-worship being so bad, may not be made worse than it is, it may be considered, That they do not take the Bread to be the Deity, nor to be he that is God, save only according to his Human Body, into which they believe the Bread is changed, and so worship it as our Lords Body; or to express it in the most favourable sence, they worship him as there present in his proper Body; and withal, worship the bread supposed to be that Body.

#### §. 6. *Of the Popish Invocation of Angels and Saints departed.*

THIS Invocation is without Precept or Precedent in Holy Scripture. Invocation on God alone is according to Scripture. Christ teacheth, to pray, *Our Father*, in his great Rule and Standard of Prayer. We are taught to Invoke him, on whom

whom we believe, *Rom. 10. 14.* which is God alone. As-  
cense the Type, so Prayer the thing typified, is to be offered to  
God alone.

Prayer is an Act of such Worship as Papists call *Latria*.  
It supposeth the Being to whom it is directed, to be the Author  
and Fountain of the good we pray for. And so they that  
are prayed to, are invocated in Gods stead. And whereas some  
say, That the Saints are to be invocated, not as Authors of Di-  
vine benefits; it is apparent that Papists invoke them as Au-  
thors directly and without ambages, praying to them for health  
and deliverance from danger, yea for the highest benefits, as to  
St. Peter to open Heaven Gates to them. They direct their  
prayers to them as to those that can dispence the Grace of God  
to men at their pleasure.

Also prayer implies a prostration of the whole Soul and Spi-  
rit, and Body, to the person that is invocated, by Acts of Subje-  
ction, Devotion, Dependence, Reverence, and all highest Observance.  
Experience shews the fond ravishments of Soul in the super-  
stitions towards those to whom more especially they are devoted,  
ordinarily making no inferior Expressions of their Devotion to-  
wards them, than toward God and Christ: Yea, they are so in-  
tercepted and taken up by this Dotage, as to forget God.

If Saints are invocated as Mediators, they are invocated in  
Christs stead. Christ is our Intercessor in Heaven, as our Redeem-  
er, *1 John 2. 1.* And therefore they that are not our Redeemers,  
cannot be our intercessors in Heaven.

Moreover we cannot rationally commend our prayers to any  
but such, as we know both can, and will represent them to God.

The Popish Invocation of Saints and Angels, is an ascribing  
to them the incommunicable Excellencies of God, as to be  
searchers of hearts, and perceptive of all the cases and  
concernments of those that invoke them; and an Omniscience  
and Omnipresence, if not absolute, yet at least respective to  
this lower World, the Habitation of us Mortals, is ascribed to  
them thereby.

To excuse this Sacriledge and Idolatry, that incredible conceit  
of the Saints beholding all things, in *speculo Trinitatis*, is but a  
sorry shift. Such Omniscience the Manhood of Christ hyposta-  
tically united to the Godhead, did not pretend unto. And  
the devising of it, is a transcendent presumption of mans wit, for  
the invading of Gods right.

The truth is, the Worship of Saints and Angels maintained in the *Roman* Church, in parity of reason answers the *Pagans* Worshipping of *Demons*, being either Souls of Men departed, or other Invisible Powers, whom they imagined to be Inferior Deities subordinate and ministering to the Supreme God. And after the manner of the Heathens, the Papists have appointed among the Saints certain particuilar Patrons of Provinces, Cities, Artificers, living Creatures, &c.

When we desire holy persons on Earth to pray for us, we seek not to them as Patrons, or Intercessors in the vertue of their Mérits; but as Brethren at the same distance from God with us. And the help is mutual, according to the Communion of Saints, and for which we have Promise, Precept and Example.

§ 7. *Of Erecting Altars, and bringing Oblations to any besides God.*

**T**Hose external Acts, that by Nature or Custome, or Divine Institution, are or were appropriated Expressions of that internal honour or observance that is due to God alone, are Divine Worship. And such are the Acts of Erecting Altars, and bringing Oblations, and burning Incense, and making Vows, and dedicating Temples, and ordaining Festivals.

The Erecting of Altars, either for Sacrifice or other Oblations to any being, imports either an apprehension of that being, as an avenger of sin in a higher way than mans temporal Judgment and Vengeance, and the propitiating thereof towards us; or else a grateful acknowledgment of benefits received from a higher hand, than any humane Benefactor upon Earth, even from a soveraign providence. And that which is so propitiated, or gratefully acknowledged, must be either the Supreme God, or some Inferior Deity, to which that is ascribed, which the most High God hath not communicated to any other.

And besides the reason of the thing, the custom of all mankind, and Divine Ordination, hath made this a proper Act of Divine Worship. If it were high presumption to render that kind of Worship to any subject, which the Sovereign Prince hath appropriated to himself; much more presumptuous and sacrilegious is it for us to use the appropriated signs of Divine honour, towards any Creature.

Nay, tho God hath now relinquished such a Mode of Worship, as Altars properly so called, and Sacrifices, and Oblations Propitiatory or Eucharistical, (the reason of them ceasing by the new Dispensation); yet it is Idolatrous to use the same afterwards towards a Creature. For tho it be used in Divine Service, yet still it hath the Impress or Signification of Divine honour.

Wherefore the Erecting of Altars and bringing Oblations to any besides God, is Idolatry.

§ 8. Of making Vows to any besides God.

**B**OTH Divine Ordination, and the Custom of Nations, hath made the making of Vows a proper act of Divine Worship; and therefore when it is directed to any Creature, it is Idolatry.

In the reason of the thing, Vowing is an act of Divine Worship.

Vowing to God imports Heart-Subjection and Devotion to him, and trust in him as the Sovereign disposer of us and our concerns;

Veheement and resolute Promises made to men upon Earth, may Metaphorically be called Vows to them. And things set apart for the use and Service of some persons only, may in like manner of speaking be said to be devoted to them.

The Popish Vows made to Saints departed, are of the same reason with Vows made to God, importing that Subjection, Devotion and Dependence, which is due to God alone, and therefore are Idolatrous.

Sometimes the very matter of Vows made to Saints, are matters of Religious observance, or Devotion towards them, as of Invocation, Oblations, Dedication of Temples to them, &c. Sometimes the matter of such Vows may be something to be performed to men upon Earth, as for one to Vow to a Saint, that he will give so much to the Poor; and even in this latter case the Vow *quoad formale* is a religious Subjection or Observance towards the Saint, as an Invisible Celestial power, in expectation of favour from him in case of performance, and of vengeance in case of failing therein.

It will not excuse these Popish Votaries to say, That in Vowing to the Saints they do not imply an *Obsequium* or Devotion to-



wards them, as the first Principle or Cause; *Sec.* which they say is *Latvia*; nor an expectation of favour or vengeance from them, as their absolute Supreme Governours, and disposers of them and their Affairs; but only as Inferior to God. For the things which God challenges to himself, they render to the Saints, (tho' pretendedly but in an inferior respect), as namely, the prostration of the Soul and Spirit, the Subjection of the Conscience to them, and Dependence on them, as causes of good or evil in a Supernatural, transcendent, and Divine manner of dispensation.

It was one kind of the Idolatry of the old Heathens, to Erect Altars, and make Vows, and Prayers, and offer Sacrifices to such as they knew were not the Supreme God, but the Souls of men departed, or other *Demons*. And Idolatry was rare among the *Romans*, if this were not Idolatry. The Papists do in their practice make the Saints departed such Inferior Deities, as the Heathen *Demons* were. And indeed they have borrowed the names *Divi* and *Dive* from them.

Moreover, to make Vows to Saints, supposeth them capable of receiving Vows, and that capacity supposeth them to know all things on Earth, or at least all things whensoever and wheresoever directed to them, even the secret intents of the heart; and this makes them Gods *κατα τι*.

§ 9. Of burning Incense to any besides God.  
**B**urning of Incense is a kind of Worship which God hath appropriated to himself, and therefore this Worship given to any Saint or Angel is Idolatry.

The burning of Incense did typifie prayers, and praises, and other spiritual Services, offered up as a sweet favour, or acceptable to God; therefore can no more be offered to a Creature than prayers, or the like Services may.

Bring offered by the Priest in the Sanctuary, while the people were praying in the Court of the Temple, it did typifie the Intercession of Jesus Christ with God. Therefore it is Divine Worship; and being transferred to any Creature, it is no less than Idolatry.



§ 10. *Of dedicating Places and Times, and erecting a symbolical presence to any besides God.*

**T**HESSE are acts which God appropriated as his own Worship. The dedicating either of Temples and Chappels, or Groves or other places, to any Saint or Angel, as the place of his worship and special residence, and benign influence upon mortals that make their Addresses to him (which the Papists do) is Idolatry; it being divine worship directed to a wrong object, or that which is not God.

But to dedicate Temples or Chappels to God and his Service only, but in memorial of Saints or Angels, is not Idolatry, it being not a rendering ought to the creature that is due to God alone, tho' those places be called by the names of such Saints and Angels in honour of their memory.

The case of dedicating Days and Times to Saints and Angels, may be stated and resolved in the same manner.

The erecting of a Symbolical Presence, with incensation thitherward, was declared by God to be a manner of worship due to him, and not to be given to any else; and therefore to observe the same towards any other, is idolatry.

§ 11. *Of worshipping Reliques.*

**I** Suppose by Reliques are meant not only any parts of Christ or the Saints, but also any adjuncts, as Raiment, &c.

When the Papists say, That a Saints Reliques are to be worshipped with the same worship that is due to the Saint; and Christs Reliques with the same worship that is due to Christ, they are self convicted idolaters.

No doubt a respect may be had to the true Reliques of Saints, as we respect the Reliques of dear Friends, or of Ancestors, or of worthy Patriots or Princes, as some remaining Monuments of those that have left the World.

For any to make use of Reliques to keep the Devil away from them, or for any preservation spiritual or temporal, is a foolish superstition.

§ 12. Of worshipping the Cross.

**S**Taurolatry is Idolatry.

It is a question with me, Whether many of the Papists can mean by the worshipping of the Cross, and of Reliques, any more than high veneration, or reverend respect. Surely they are not all so stupid as to pray to them, or to expect help from them, as from principal agents, but only as from instruments or means.

Yet there is no ground of veneration or reverence to the Cross for its relation to Christ: For it was the instrument of the Cruelty of his Murderers. And the Cross did not bring salvation, as a cause thereof, any more than the men that crucified Christ. Christ overcame not by the Cross, but on the Cross, it being taken in the proper, and not in a figurative sense.

Paul's glorying in the Cross of Christ, is to be taken tropically for Christ as crucified.

Besides, if the Cross properly taken, were to be gloried in, it doth not follow that it is to be revered, much less adored. One may glory in a shameful suffering for Christ; and yet the suffering is not to be adored nor revered.

§ 13. Whether Christ as Man, or Mediator, is to be worshipped.

**L**ET it be considered, 1. There is but one immediate, formal, and adequate reason of Divine Worship; to wit, the Supreme Majesty, independent and infinite excellency of the Eternal Godhead. 2. All Divine Worship is, for the nature of it, the highest obsequance and honour that can be given, because the formal object, and the adequate reason or ground of it, is the highest and infinite Excellence and Sovereignty. 3. Tho in Christ the Mediator the Godhead be necessary to mediation, yet mediation is not necessary to the Godhead. 4. Our Faith doth not rest simply and finally, but mediately on Christ, as he is our Mediator God-man. 5. Christ's Mediatory power and glory as God-man, is different from his natural and essential power and glory.

Now to answer the question, That Jesus Christ, the Mediator God-man, is to be worshipped, appears plainly from *Rev.* 1. 6. *Rev.* 5. 8, 12, 13, 14. *Rom.* 14. 3, 9. But from the foregoing confi-

consideration it is evinced, that he is Worshipped with Divine Worship, not as Mediator, but as God. Christ as Mediator is the material or terminative, but not the formal object thereof. For if upon supposition of what cannot be, our Mediator had not been God, he could not have been Worshipped with Divine Worship. That God should communicate the honour due to him, as God to another that is not God, is impossible.

Indeed Christ is Worshipped as Mediator, if we take as Mediator *specificative* to denote the person Worshipped, and not *reduplicative* to denote the formal reason of his being Worshipped. Therefore Divine Worship ascribed as due to Christ, invincibly proves his Divine Nature.

Tho the Office of Christ, and the discharging of it, be not the formal ground, yet it is an excellent motive to give him that Worship that is due to his Infinite Excellence and Sovereignty.

When any one saith, *Lord Jesus pray for me*, the prayer is directed to him as God, tho the business recommended to him, is performed by him as man. And withal note, that we desire him to intercede for us, in a way becoming the coessential Son of God.

Christ is adored, not as Judge *reduplicative*, but because he is Judge, and because the Godhead judgeth principally, but the Manhood only by instrumental concurrence and Association.

Christ in his Mediatory Office doth put forth Divine Operations, but not as in such an Office *formaliter*, and immediately, but as it is seated in a Divine person. 2ly. Some further answer, That the Divine Operations so put forth, are impulsive causes, but not formal reasons of Adoration.

In what respect the Divinity is communicated to the humanity of Christ, in that respect Divine Worship is communicated thereunto, that is, in respect of Hypostatical Union. The Divinity withal its adorable Attributes, is hypostatically residing in the Humanity. And the Man Christ Jesus is Worshipped not as man, but as hypostatically united to the Godhead.

When we Worship Christ, our Worship is terminated on his person as God-man; but the ground of the Worship is wholly taken from his being God.

§ 14. Of Worshipping Images, or of Idolatry in the Mediate object of Worship.

**A**N Image is the likeness or resemblance of any thing. And the use of it in Religious Worship, is to represent that whose Image it is.

More largely, an Image may be taken for that which represents another thing, tho not supposed to be the likeness thereof, an Instance whereof is given in an unhewn Stone for *Neptuns*.

A Symbol of presence is not the same thing with an Image. For only the presence of a thing after a sort is denoted by the one; but the other presents the thing itself. Therefore God allowed Symbols of his presence, but forbade the making of any Image of him.

The Worshipping of an Image may be considered, either as giving Worship to the matter of it, which is Wood, Stone, Metal, &c. or to the object represented by it, a supposed Deity.

Moreover, a material Image may be conceited to be more than a meer Image or representing likeness, and taken for an animated body, or an incorporated Deity, and the Worship may be directed both to the material, and the invisible substance together, as to a compound consisting of Body and Soul.

The Worship given to a meer Image, cannot be understood to be given to it, in regard of its physical substance, as it is Wood or Stone, &c. but meerly upon the account of its resembling and representing the Prototype. And it is Worshipped not absolutely as the ultimately terminating object; but relatively, as a medium or mediate object; and no rational Idolater can render more to an Image. Wherefore the Prototype is Worshipped in it, and the Worship passeth through it to the Prototype as to the ultimate object.

And consequent to this it is, that the Worship given to the Image, must be of the same kind with that which is given to the Prototype, yet given to the Image but improperly, and relatively; for if it be of another kind, it doth terminate in the Image it self, and doth not by the Image pass to the ultimate object.

The Worshippers of Images are not agreed, what Worship is due to them. *Bellarmino* saith, The Worship that is due to an Image properly by it self, as terminating the Worship, is a kind  
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of imperfect analogical Worship reductive to the Worship due to the Exemplar, which is neither *latría*, nor *hyperdulia*, nor *dulia*, but is reduced to them as imperfect to the perfect.

Hence it follows, that for image-worshippers to avoid Idolatry, it is requisite that they understand these distinctions of *latría*, *dulia*, *hyperdulia*, by it self, and by accident, properly, improperly, simply, *secundum quid*, analogically, reductively. And is this safe provision for the souls of men, that they may not incur the anger of the jealous God, by the provoking-sin of idolatry, and all to set up a Worship that is needless?

A meer inanimate thing can have no kind of excellence in it self to deserve Worship from us men; nor any reverence as the absolute and properly terminating object thereof; and consequently, a meer material image cannot be rationally intended for such an object of worship. But if the image be taken for an animate body, or an incorporated Deity, then it is an absolutely terminating object of the worship performed to it.

Worshipping towards a Symbolical presence, is not a worshipping of the symbol, as the bowing to the throne of a Prince, is not a worshipping of the throne. And so the bowing towards the Mercy-seat in the most holy place, was not a worshipping thereof. It was *medium cultus*, but not *medium cultum*.

The idolatry of image-worship is most frequently spoken of in Scripture, because it was most ordinary; and it is the concomitant of almost all other kinds of idolatry. For both the true and false gods are by idolaters commonly worshipped in images. I shall consider this kind of idolatry, first as it is used in the worship of false gods, and then as it is used in the worship of the true God.

#### § 15. Of the worshipping of false Gods in Images.

**A**Mong the Heathens, the images of their gods were called gods, not properly, but tropically; as the Picture of a man is called a Man; for humane understanding cannot take a meer statue, or a picture, for a god. Therefore as to this point the Heathens were as justifiable as the Papists.

The Heathens thought that the special residences of their gods were in the images, and that their power was exerted by them. So do the Papists take their Sacred images for the special residen-

ees, as of God, and of Christ, so of the Saints and Angels, which they also worship with the worship due to God only, and so make them idols.

The Devil by Gods permission was wont to dwell and operate in certain images, by which means they came to be famous, and more adored than others. So the Papists think a divine or supernatural efficacy to be tyed to one image, more than to another.

The Vulgar Heathens being infatuated by Satanical illusions, might without much difficulty be brought in part to terminate their worship in the images themselves, being set forth and adorned as they were, to astonish the beholders, and raise fear in them, that they might apprehend them the very gods which they worshipped, but not the whole of them, but only as it were the bodies, wherewith the invisible Deities did incorporate. And multitudes of ignorant vulgar Papists may be supposed to be under the same gross infatuation.

Upon the Reasons foregoing it might be, that the Prophets laboured so much to prove that images were not gods.

As the more intelligent Papists look upon the images no otherwise than as Symbols and Representations of those beings to which they give divine worship; so the more intelligent Heathens did no otherwise.

As the wiser Heathens extremely differed in their opinions about the gods, from the Vulgar; yet concurred with them in all external rites of worship; so do the more learned Papists concur with the ignorant vulgar among them in all external practices of their idolatry.

To worship a false God in an image, is double idolatry, because here two things that are not God, are worshipped with divine worship, viz. the ultimate object absolutely, and the Medium or mediate object, to wit, the image relatively.

#### § 16. Of making images of the true God:

**A**N image to represent the true God, is an idol, as the golden Calf in the Wilderness, and the Calves of *Dan* and *Bethel*.

To make an image of God, is to blaspheme him. An infinite Nature cannot be represented, but it must be an infinite disparagement to it.



It may be asked, May not God be represented by such corporeal forms, as sometimes he appeared in? *Ans.* In the burning bush, and in the glory on *Mount Sinai*, God appeared not as in an image or representation of himself, but as in symbols of his presence. Whether it were God or Angels only that appeared to *Abraham* and *Jacob* in humane shape, is controvertible; or it might be God the Son as a *preludium* to his incarnation. Besides, God did not take those humane shapes as images or representations of himself, but as signs of his presence.

The soul of man is Gods image, but in an equivocal, improper, metaphorical sense. And such an image of God as it is, it cannot be pictured; and an image of mans body is not so much as the image of Gods image.

No made image can be the image of that Excellency, in respect whereof God differs from the creature.

The virtues of the mind are more capable of being pictured, than God is.

God forbid the *Israelites* to make an image of him, and adds this reason, That in *Mount Sinai* they saw no similitude, *Exod.* 20. 4. *Deut.* 4. 5.

It is folly to say, Only such images are forbidden as are intended to express the perfect likeness of God; and that he hath allowed an image for analogical resemblance of him. For none is so mad as to think any image doth express the perfect likeness of God. The Heathens, that acknowledged the Eternal God, did not think that any of their images did express the perfect likeness thereof. And did God make a Law to forbid that which is impossible in the nature of the thing, and allow all possible Representations of him?

The Cherubims were no Representation of God; they were only Hieroglyphical signs of Gods own appointment.

To make an image of Fire or Light, to signify the inaccessible light which God dwells in, or to picture rays of light with the Name of God, is not to make an image or representation of him; it is no other than Hieroglyphical writing.

*Moses* saw that which the Scripture calls Gods back parts, to wit, a created glory.

There is a great deal of difference between imperfect conceptions of God in our minds, and unworthy representations of him to our senses. And I know no other conception of God, than of a Being

infinitely perfect ; and this is an intellectual apprehension, and not a material imagination of him.

§ 17. *Of worshipping the True God in Images.*

**T**O worship God in images, is not to glorifie him as God, but to extenuate his glory by a false Representation of him.

To worship God in an image, is in the sense of image-worshippers to worship the Image it self with divine honour *relative*.

And so to worship an image, is to make it a false God, or idol, and to communicate Gods worship to the creature. The golden Calf is in Scripture called an idol.

To worship God as animating an image, is idolatry.

To make an image to be *medium cultum*, or the thing which we worship mediately on pretence of its representing God, and that we worship him in it ultimately, is the thing directly forbidden in the Second Commandment.

I think it is also thereby forbidden, to make an image or representation of God to be *medium cultus*, tho it should not be *medium cultum* ; because it seems to me, that God in the Second Commandment forbids such resemblances and representations of himself, not only to be worshipped, but to be used in his Worship.

It is not unlawful to make an image of other things besides God, as of some holy man, as an object or medium of our consideration, exciting our minds to worship God.

Query, Whether a Crucifix, or an Historical image of Christ, according to his humane body, may not be used in that manner ? If it be lawful to have such a Picture of Christ, why may we not make use of the beholding thereof, to excite our devotion to him ?

Nevertheless, seeing the Second Commandment forbids the worshipping of God by a representation, as a means of worship, tho not worshipped ; I doubt whether lawfully we may have a Picture of Christ ( who is worshipped indeed in his whole person, yet only upon the account of his divine nature ) as a means of the worship rendered to him. Besides there is peril of idolatry, and of worshipping the Picture it self.

For the same cause I think it dangerous to have a Crucifix or other Picture of Christ for a stated or fixed representation of him according to his humane body.

§ 18. *Of material Images and Representations not of God, but of other things used in Gods Worship, and of the Symbols of the Divine Presence; of worshipping towards the East, and bowing towards the Altar.*

TO make such Images and Representations to be used in Divine Worship, is not simply evil, as appears by the brazen Serpent, a temporary Ordinance for an occasion in the Wilderness; and by the Cherubims on the Mercy seat, a stated Ordinance for the Mosaic dispensation.

There were also supernatural unimitable Representations, tho not of the Divine nature, yet of the Divine presence, as the burning bush, and the appearances on Mount Sinai.

Divine worship directed to such Images or Representations as to a mediate object, is idolatry. The Ark, and the Cherubims, and the Temple, were not made the object of Worship. A learned man writes, That incurvation in way of Religion towards any Symbolical presence, as to an object, is flat idolatry; if it be in worship of Saints, Angels, and Demons, it is double idolatry; if in the worship of the true God, single.

I suppose it is one thing to make somewhat (as for instance, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Mercy-seat, and the Temple) an object of our consideration in the Worship of God, as instructing and exciting therein; and another thing to make it the object of worship itself. And the said Author saith, That to direct our adoration towards a supernatural and unimitable transplendency of the divine presence, is not idolatry I suppose he means, that the burning bush which Moses saw, and the visible glories on the Mount, were only *media cultus*, not objects thereof, the presence of God shining through the same as a bright medium.

Whether a symbolical presence of God may be erected of mans devising, is to be examined. I think it high presumption and arrogance so to do. For it is uncertain, at least to men, whether God in the times of the Gospel reside in any local limits more especially than elsewhere. And from our Saviour's words *Joh. 4. Neither in Jerusalem, nor in this mountain, &c.* the contrary is by many

many supposed to be evident. But if God doth chuse any local limits of his special residence more than others, can any besides himself assign the same?

Gods special residence with his people, and yet more special in the time of his worship, is of another reason than his residence in certain places. And this residence with his people he himself hath testified in his word, and the reason of the thing is manifest.

Therefore to make our Temples or Altars (as some call the Communion Tables) to be a *Shechinah* or divine presence, I suppose is unwarrantable; as also to call the Communion Table (as some have) *Solum Christi*.

The lifting up of eyes and hands to heaven in prayer and praise, is warrantable and comely, because there God dwells in his greatest visible glory; and he hath declared in his word, that he hath made the Heaven his throne, and the earth his footstool.

The ancient Churches that worshipped towards the East, did not worship the East as a middle term or object, and therefore were not guilty of idolatry. What they meant by it, I understand not any further, than a mystical sense in that posture of worship, as that Christ is the day spring from on high, or the Sun of righteousness arising, &c. And as to the expediency of that custom, I leave it here undetermined.

I believe that those among us who bow towards the Altar (as they call it) do not make it an object of worship. Some give this account thereof, that it is of the same nature with putting off our hats while we are there; which putting off the hat surely is no making of the Altar, or place where it stands, or the Building, or any part thereof, the object of worship, but is an expression of reverence either in the worship of God, or to the stated place of his worship. Some may make the Altar a symbolical presence, or the throne of Christ, which I think to be unwarrantable, and therefore bowing towards it upon that account to be culpable. Some may have only a mystical signification in it, as was in the ancient usage of worshipping towards the East. Some may use it only for uniformity's sake, that seeing to bow to God in their entrance into the Church, and going out of it, is fit (as they suppose), therefore it is also fit to direct it the same way. But the expedience of this practice I leave undetermined.

§ 19. *Of the Scandalous use of Images.*

**I**T may be a stumbling-block to have such Images, as others among us give unlawful worship to; as in Popish Countreys to have the image of a Crucifix, and the Virgin *Mary*, and other Saints, and of Angels. Yea, I think it better not to have them at all, by reason of the peril of idolatry.

To place such images in Churches, is a publick stumbling-block: for it may be a temptation to some to worship them; and to say the least, they do more hurt than good.

The Historical use of such images in divine worship as are wont to be worshipped, that is, to have them for objects of remembrance, and means of exciting devotion, is dangerous; and more especially such a use of the images of the object then worshipped, as a Crucifix or other picture of Christ, because it tends to pollute the mind with idolatrous imaginations, or by prepossessing the mind to hinder the spiritual exercise thereof, which is the ordinary effect of images.

Any images of feigned Deities, or of any powers, which are a temptation to any to believe in them, and worship them, are unlawful.

To set before our own or others eyes the images of the old symbols of divine presence in the time of worship tho as objects only of remembrance, and means of exciting our affection to God, is dangerous.

§ 20. *Of the meer appearance of Idolatry in any kind.*

**B**Y the meer appearance of idolatry, I understand not external, or merely corporeal idolatry, of which I have before spoken. For this differs from that on this manner: That is an outward sign of inward worship, tho it be but seeming or feigned; but this is only an appearance of being such a sign, when it is not.

Query about incurvation towards the Altar, or Communion-Table, Whether it give not an appearance of idolatry before the Vulgar, and those that are less accurate in distinguishing between an object to which, and toward which?

Query much more about directing worship towards a Crucifix or other pictures, tho but as to objects of remembrance.

The same appearance may be in the mixing of expressions of veneration to Saints or Angels amidst the worship of God, tho they be not those expressions that are appropriated to Gods worship, but only such as are common to the worship due to God and the creatures. There may be indeed a notorious signifying of the difference of our veneration towards them, from what is due to God. Howbeit for fear of scandal, it may be better wholly forborn.

Also the like appearance may be in bowing to a King or Potentate amidst the Worship of God, except time, custom, and manner of doing, do notoriously notifie the distinction.

Also when that which is a common expression both of Civil and Religious honour, shall be made by a King to be a symbol of giving divinee honour to him, if one use that expression towards him or his image with a civil intent, without protesting against the idolatrous use thereof.

§ 21. *Whether a course of Idolatry in what kind soever, infer a state of damnation.*

THE meaning of this Question is, Whether all Idolatry be mortal sin, not only in respect of desert, but existence, as sins whose ordinary habitual practice denies the being of grace, and presence of the sanctifying Spirit.

That all idolatry in whatsoever degree, is not of this nature, is plain. For idolatry in general is the giving of that honour to the creature, which is due to the Creator alone; and this lies not only in solemn avowed worship, but in the affection of the heart. There are *Idola seculi*, as well as *Idola templi*. And it is too common among the true worshippers of God, to rob him of his honour, and to place it upon the creature, and that habitually, as on a Child, or Wealth, &c. tho only in a mortified, and not in a prevalent degree. The remainders of covetousness, which is idolatry, is a witness hereof.

And if this may be in reference to the idols of the heart, why not also in reference to the idols of the Temple? Nay, more easily may it be in this later, than in the former respect, in some devout persons that live in darker times and places, because it may proceed



proceed not from the love of the creature, more than God; but meerly from ignorance and error about the way of Divine Worship.

Wherefore I doubt not, but many holy Souls in darker Ages & Countries, have been habitually or customarily guilty of a lower kind of Idolatry in making Idols to themselves, not simply as God, but *kata ti*. And the excessive honour they gave to the creature, did not destroy the sincerity of their Devotion towards God, nor deny their unfeigned giving of the highest honour to him alone. For such we now speak of, may heartily and prevalently own the true God, and all the essentials of Religion, and so they may be of the true Church of God, as True is taken for the essence, and not for the integral perfectness and healthfulness of the Church.

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## The Third Part: Of Superstition less than Idolatry.

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### § 1. Of excess in the quantity or measure of Religious Observances.

**A**LL Superstition is an excess in Religion. The excess in the object thereof, being opened in the Second Part, here it remains that I speak of that which is in the Acts thereof; and this excess is either in the measure or in the kind, when the Rule of Religion is transgressed in either of these ways; and in some instances there may be an excess in both.

Excess in the quantity or measure of Religious Observances is, when tho the thing in kind were not an excess, yet for the quantity it is more than conduceth to the end of Religion, yea is an hindrance thereto; as for Example, Prayer, or Preaching of the word too Prolix, or at an unreasonable time; too rigid pressing of Religious Exercises on the Lords day, or at any other

time lawfully set apart thereunto, contrary to the works of Mercy, or present necessity; yea that conveniency to life and converse, which doth not divert the mind from the things of God; too much care and curiosity about circumstances of Decency and Order; and too great a heaping up of Rites and Formalities.

§ 2. *Of Excess in Religious Observances, for the kind thereof.*

**E**Xcess in the kind, is when mans presumption in giving honour to God, gives such signs of honour to him, as for kind he would not should be given, but hath forbidden the same.

God may forbid the kinds of Religious Observances either in particular, as he did some heathenish rites to his people of old, expressing them by name; or else in general, *viz.* by a general rule forbidding all of such a nature and reason in common.

Some kind of Religious Observances are unlawful in themselves, or in the nature of the things, as being naturally unfit to be offered to the Holy God, namely, such kind of Worship as was given to *Bacchus*, and other like heathen gods, who were served *congruenti vitio*. And such need not to be forbidden *in specie*, because they are naught in their common nature, being vices, and 'tis enough to be forbidden *in genere*.

Some kinds of Religious Worship may not be vicious in their nature, nor contrary to Gods holiness to command or allow: Yet may be forbidden by the general precept of Scripture, or other supernatural Revelation.

§ 3. *Of the Rule that limits the kinds of Worship.*

**O**F Natural Worship, the Law of Nature is the limiting Rule for all the kinds thereof. Of positive Worship, namely, all that which *in specie* is not necessary in nature, but is of free Determination, the kinds thereof are supposed to be either restrained to Divine Institution, or left to humane choice.

That there are Divine Institutions of positive Worship in sundry kinds, is acknowledged by all that acknowledg the Scriptures Divine Authority. And that many kinds of positive Worship have

have been taken up by humane discretion, is known by all that know what is practiced in the World. Now the Question is, Whether these kinds that are of humane choice, are lawful or lawfully intermingled in their use with Divine Institutions?

That all kinds of positive Worship should be left to humane choice, seems in reason repugnant, in regard of mans natural darkness in Divine things, and proneness at the best to mistake therein, and to devise and chuse that which is incongruous or less congruous; much more in regard of mans propensity to Superstition, and bold presumption about Religious Ordinances.

And *de facto*, we find that God hath not so left the matter, but taken care to appoint the Worship which he expects from men in all Ages, as best knowing what is best pleasing to himself.

And in reason it must needs be, that he hath sufficiently provided for his honour in the Worship that he hath Instituted, as much as concerns or belongs to the reason and end of those kinds which he hath instituted.

And thereupon it is found in reason to be a presuming of our own against the Divine Wisdom, either to change an Ordinance which God hath instituted, for another ordinance of our own devising, of the same reason, and to the same intent; or to add to the Divine Ordinances by way of supplement, Humane Ordinances of the same reason and intent with the Divine; and that either as necessary to Divine Service, or only as profitable, and *de bene esse*. For so to do, is plainly to derogate from the Divine Ordinances.

Therefore it must be concluded, that there are certain Ordinances of Divine Worship which may not be left to mans discretion, either to change them, or to make additions to them of others of the same reason and intent, either as necessary or profitable; and in that regard supplemental and perfective.

The expresse Text of Scripture proves this, that some additions are forbidden, *Dent. 4. 2. Dent. 12. 32.* The prohibition is not meerly of adding to the Rule, but of doing more than the Rule requires; as the precept is not of preserving the Rule, but observing what is commanded in it. It is indeed against mingling the heathenish observations with Divine Institutions. And it

is not to be imagined, that it is only a prohibition of the forgery of Divine Oracles.

§ 4. *What of divine worship may not be devised or instituted by man.*

NOW it is to be considered what kind of Religious observations God hath reserved to his own determination, and forbidden to be devised or instituted by man. And these are first, Such as are of the same reason with those Ordinances which God hath instituted to be observed by the universal Church to the Worlds end; as to make an addition of another weekly day to the same holy intents for which the Lords day is set apart; to institute any Ordinance that is of the same reason with the Sacraments of the Covenant of Grace.

In vain do some say, That it is impossible for man to make a Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace, and consequently no ordinance devised of man ought to be excepted against as such. For altho God only can institute a lawful and valid Sacrament of the Covenant; yet man may presume to institute an ordinance that is of the same nature, reason, and intent with the Sacrament of divine institution, tho it be unlawful, and of no validity; even as other divine worship may be invented by man, which is not right nor effectual.

As touching the efficacy and profitableness of an ordinance, here distinguish between an aptitude to profit in case of Gods approbation; and an actual profitableness. No doubt but many things not instituted of God, have an aptitude to be useful; but it follows not that they will be useful if ordained by men. For the actual usefulness comes not from the aptitude of the thing, but from Gods institution; but that which is contrary to the will of God, is not blessed to supernatural ends; yea, that which is not sanctified of God thereunto, is not so blessed.

The God can be obliged by a seal only of his own annexing to his Covenant, yet it is too possible for men to presume so far as to institute that whereby they fancy God as sealing and conveying to them his grace, and indeed that which can mean no less.

MOREOVER, in a Sacrament of the Covenant, as grace on Gods part is sealed, so self-dedication on mans part. And an ordinance of mans devising, that seals self-dedication to God upon the

terms of the Covenant of Grace, is at least the Moity of a Sacrament.

2. No new integral part of divine worship, without which the worship of God is supposed not intire, but deficient in part, may be invented of man. For it were to invent a new part of the Christian Religion, and to augment it beyond the state thereof, as settled by the Author and Founder of it.

Here note, that the accidental parts of Religion being varied, or augmented, or diminished, make no variation, addition, or diminution in the Religion, no more than alteration in clothes makes an alteration in the man.

3. No ordinance that is of universal and perpetual use to the Church of God ( if it be at all of use ) so that it may in no place, in no age be omitted, may be devised of man. For the devising of such an ordinance supposeth a defect in the divine ordinances of universal and perpetual use, to be made up by adding other ordinances by way of supplement. And it is but a presuming that those other are requisite, when they are not. Also if the universal Lawgiver hath reserved any thing to his own power, it can be no less than the making of such Laws or Ordinances as are of universal and perpetual use. And surely that he hath reserved something to himself, few among us will gainsay.

Howbeit an arbitrary and temporary use of a Religious observance by particular men for such ends, as equally concern all Christians, may not be unlawful upon this account, because therein Christs Legislative power is not encroached upon, it being not made a Law to the Church, but only a private arbitrary observation.

§ 5. *What things of or belonging to Divine Worship, may be devised or instituted by man.*

THE things set down under the former head as forbidden, are such new ordinances of Worship as are co-ordinate with the divine ordinances, and are in proper sense additions, pretending, or in themselves expressing the same nature, reason, end and use, that the divine ordinances have, and consequently importing an insufficiency in them.

But there are such institutions of men in subordination to the divine institutions; as serve for the more convenient modifying and

and ordering of the same. And they are not proper Additions, because they are not of the same nature and use, and these are unlawful.

All such modes of a duty as are necessary *in genere*, and not determined *in specie*, (as when there must be a practice one way or other, but whether this way or that way, is not determined of God) are left free to humane determination.

This humane determination must be regulated by the general Rules of Gods word; of which there be these two chiet; first, That all determinations be made for edification, and not for destruction. 2<sup>ly</sup>. That all things be done decently and in order. These two Rules we find expressly in Scripture, and they are also of the Law of Nature.

These things are neither the essential nor integral parts of Divine Worship; but if any of them be called parts thereof, as being direct expressions of honour to God, they are but accidental parts; as the putting off the Hat in Divine Worship is a Worshipping of God so far as it is an expression of honour to God.

And as to such matters, the term of accidental Worship may be allowed, not as if they had nothing of the Nature of Worship in them in any degree, (for Divine Worship is a genus, not Univocal, but Analogical, being predicated of all that comes under it, in some common notion or nature, but not in the same degree; and these partake of the nature of Worship, but in the lowest degree), but because they are not essential parts of Religion, nor integral; being contradistinct to the substantial and more important parts thereof. And as being circumstantial expressions of giving honour to God, they may be called circumstantial Worship. As for example, putting off the Hat is a Worship-gesture, and Worship only so much as gesture comes to.

These accidental parts ordinarily go not alone, but in attendance on other more important parts, even of external Worship. Yet it may be here considered, whether putting off the Hat, or Bowing, or Kneeling, and the like, may not be Acts of external Worship *per se*, or going alone, and not merely in concommittance with other external Acts thereof. As, whether *Moses* his putting off his Shooes in the place where the Bush burned, were an Act of Worship *per se*, and not only as a circumstance or attend-



attendance on other Worship; and so for the same or like Act in any other symbolical presence of God. If it be so, these Acts are even then but of the lower nature of accidental parts or modes of Worship.

I conceive the Lords commanding *Moses* to put off his Shooes, was not a new precept of Worship, but only a directing him to, or minding him of that, which already in that case was required, by telling him the occasion, which he was not aware of.

Whatsoever Nature or Custom hath so made decent or reverent, that the negation of it is undecent or irreverent, is doubtless commanded of God in his Worship, tho not by any particular, yet by general Laws.

And the Institution and Observation of such things is no Addition to Gods Law, but meerly an Application of the general Law in particular Cases, as the Law it self doth warrant.

All these are such mutable things, as are not fit to be in particular the matter of an universal Law, because they are fit in one place, and at one time, and not another.

Note, that things not determined of God, and left to the determination of men, must be such as are necessary *in genere*, and not things idle and superfluous. A Superior may not institute a superfluous thing that is not simply evil; tho sometimes the inferior may lawfully obey therein; or to speak more properly, lawfully do the thing to avoid inconvenience, or to testify respect to the Superior, tho in that particular he hath no lawful power to command.

Note also, that of things necessary *in genere*, the Superior may not lawfully determine for such species, as, tho not simply evil, may have a tendency to evil, or be evil in the consequence, when he may determine that which will not be evil in the consequence: Yet the inferior may obey, or rather observe the thing commanded, when the evil consequence of non-observance will be greater than the evil consequence of observance.

§ 6. Of the lawfulness of significant Ceremonies in Divine Worship.

BY a Ceremony, I understand an external rite in or about the Worship of God. By significant Ceremonies, I understand rites in Divine Worship, signifying some material point of Religion.

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There is no controversy about those outward actions, that by nature or general custom signify the reverence of the mind, as kneeling, and lifting up our Eyes and Hands to Heaven in token of Devotion to the God of Heaven, and being uncovered in Prayer, &c. But the question is of those that signify meerly by the force of authoritative institution, or private arbitrary intention. Such significant things, tho they may have some natural aptitude to signify such and such points of Religion; yet they do not actually signify, but as arbitrarily designed thereunto.

It is generally received, that significant Ceremonies in taking an Oath may lawfully be used; and that not only such as naturally signify, as lifting up the hand towards Heaven, but such also as signify by Institution, as laying the hand on a Book, or kissing the Book. Now tho the end of an Oath may be a Civil thing, as the ending of a controversy; yet the *form* of it is Divine Worship. And the aforesaid ceremonies are expressive of the very external part of it; and they actually signify by force of Institution.

Words signify by general custom, and have the same sense out of the Worship of God, as in it; and therefore the arguing from their lawfulness, as signs of Worship, unto the lawfulness of instituted signs, seems liable to exception. Nevertheless it may be said, that instituted signs soon become customary, and as well understood as words.

The Christians heretofore being among Infidels, might lawfully have the figure of the Cross somewhere visible about them, to shew that they were Christians. For the meaning was no more than if they had said, We are Christians. But it may be replied, this was no Act of Divine Worship, but an indicant or speaking sign towards men.

With acknowledgment of my own weakness, I express my apprehensions of this matter. God hath allowed words for signs expressive of Divine Worship; but I find not that he hath allowed words only, and forbidden Gestures and Actions for such an end. The dumb must express their internal Worship by gestures and actions, or they cannot externally Worship God at all. If signs of Devotion that are of customary signification be lawful, I see not why such as are of instituted signification should be unlawful; and especially when they become as customary,

customary, as those that have been without institution. And if instituted signs of devotion in general be lawful, I see not why signs of some special part of devotion, or mystery in Religion, should be unlawful.

I am more confident of the warrantableness of Rites and Ceremonies of Worship that are used only instead of so many words pronounced, than of those that are added to words for their more solemn ratification, as seals are to a writing, or foederal signs to a verbal Contract. Nevertheless, the forementioned Ceremonies of Swearing seem added to the words of the Oath, for more solemn ratification; and it alters not the case whether the words be read by him that administers, or pronounced by him that takes the oath; for either way they are his words that takes the oath.

Likewise I have more confidence of the warrantableness of those significant Ceremonies that are of private arbitrary intention, than of those that are of authoritative institution; also of those that are used occasionally, and *pro hic & nunc*, than of those that are used steadily.

Furthermore I apprehend, that significant Ceremonies of Divine Worship, are more apt to degenerate into Superstition; and if they be multiplied, that Religion is therewith loaded as with unprofitable luggage; and that it is a form of Religion rather *Mosaical* than Evangelical, wherein spiritual worship is most regarded.

I think also, that significant Ceremonies are not necessary *in genere*, as those things are which are left to the determination of humane authority, and so not to be instituted and imposed in the ordinary Divine Service.

I apprehend, that our Lord Christ hath instituted all those stated Ordinances of positive Worship, that are necessary to the Church Universal; and therefore that more of the same nature are not to be devised by men.

If any significant Ceremonies be indeed necessary for some parts of the Catholick Church, in respect of time and place, there seems to me a fairer plea for their institution in those times and places; but the controverted Ceremonies among us seem to be necessary for the whole Church in every age, if at all necessary.

Significant Ceremonies of the same nature and reason with those perpetual Ordinances that Christ hath instituted for the Universal Church, may not be instituted by man, and particularly such as are made Symbols of the Covenant of Grace, and Christianity.

In matters doubted among sober Christians, Superiors should take heed of strict imposing, and thereby wresting the Consciences of their subjects, and overstraining them to a compliance with them, in derogation to Gods authority in their consciences.

If Superiors command that which is above their sphere to command, namely, things not necessary *in genere*; yet if they be not simply evil, subjects may do those things, unless they be evil in their consequence to a higher degree than the not doing of them would be. In this case it is not formal obedience, but they are done for the ends sake, and to avoid evil.

#### §. 7. Of bowing at the Name of JESUS.

**I**T is rationally supposed, that in this act, not the Name, but the Person so named, is made the object of adoration; the Name pronounced is only the occasion of the present adoration of the Person.

Nothing in Reason or Scripture doth evince, that it is simply evil to adore Christ by incurvation of the body, or other reverent gesture, upon occasion of the pronouncing of the Name JESUS.

Howbeit, to make such incurvation a stated Ordinance of worship, may be an excess in Religion, that is Superstition (tho not intolerable) partly, because it too rigidly ties up Christians to a bodily exercise of no necessity, nor of great moment; partly, because it makes them attend to an overcurious gesticulation, and verges to externalness and formality, hindring the inward life and power of devotion; partly, because it makes a difference where God hath made none; and puts greater honour upon one Name, that of right hath not greater honour than the other, *viz.* Christ, God, Lord, or Jehovah. For tho the Name be not the object worshipped, yet it hath an honour and preheminance given it above the other names, without sufficient ground.

But if the said incurvation be so severely commanded, that great mischief would follow the non-observance, Thinking it may  
be

be done, tho not formally, in obedience, yet for avoiding that mischief; and peradventure it may be expedient in that case to bow at the name of *Christ, God, Lord.*

The place, *Phil. 2. 10.* is only a phrase expressing Subjection to Christ, and used also, *Rom. 14. 11.* from *Isa. 45. 23.* to expresse Subjection to God.

#### § 8. Of kneeling in the Sacrament.

**A**S for kneeling in the Sacrament, the inquiry is not here of the expediency of it, much less of the imposing of it, but of the bare lawfulness of it, against which I find no evidence.

The Act of kneeling among us is no adoration of the elements, nor owning of Christs corporal presence; but it is either a gesture of prayer then made, or a sign of most submiss and reverential receiving those pledges of Divine Grace, or both.

Yet for as much as it was a Table-gesture in which Christs Disciples received it from their Lords hand, a Table-gesture cannot reasonably be thought less safe, or less decent.

#### § 9. Of wearing the Surplice.

**A**S touching the Surplice, the wearing of a Garment of this or that colour, or of this or that form or shape in Divine Worship, is neither commanded nor forbidden of God. But tho as to its *materiale* it may be indifferent, yet as to its formal state, it may not be also so.

If the Surplice be made a holy Garment, as the Priestly Garments under the Law; if it be used to make him that wears it more holy, and the Service more acceptable for obtaining Divine Grace, it is Superstitious. If it be made a Symbol of sanctity, it may raise a scruple. But a distinctive habit of a Minister, whether used as his ordinary garb, or only in sacred Administrations, I cannot see to be Superstitious or forbidden. But a habit that is not Superstitious, may be too gawdy, or too theatrical.

What is the formal state or reason of the Surplice, is to be judged by the authoritatively declared meaning of those that injoyn it, touching its end and use.

But whatsoever the nature and reason of this Garment be, I cannot approve the enforcing of it upon such Ministers, and in such Congregations, to whom by reason of invincible prejudice, it is either odious or ridiculous, yea tho their prejudice be supposed culpable. Wise Rulers give way to the unmoveable aversness of Inferiors in things unnecessary, and of no great moment, tho of good intention. And as I should be loth to wear a fools coat in Divine Service upon the command of a Superior, so I should be loth to appear in a Congregation in a habit which I knew would be to them as ridiculous as a fools coat, tho it were their great folly so to think.

#### § 10. *Of the Ring in Matrimony.*

**F**OR as much as the Matrimonical contract and conjunction, tho it be a Divine Ordinance, yet is no part of Divine Worship, I no more doubt of the lawfulness of the Ring, as a sign of that contract, than of any other sign used for ratification of humane Contracts.

#### § 11. *Of the Cross in Baptism.*

**S**OME Nonconformists say, that they deny not the Civil use of the Cross in Coins and Banners. Others of them say, they dare not reprove the Ancient Christians that used the sign of the Cross meerly as a professing signal action to shew to the Heathen that they did believe in Christ crucified. Indeed that usage thereof was not an Act of Worship, but an informing of men touching their faith.

It seems lawful to signifie, as by words so by other signs, that we are Christ's, and his devoted Servants. For Words are but a kind of signs.

The grounds of scrupling the sign of the Cross in Baptism, are these : 1. That it is not a meer circumstance, but an Ordinance of Worship, as important as an external rite can be. 2. That being a solemn and stated Symbolical sign of a Divine Mystery, and devised of men, it is of that classis or rank of things which are not necessary *in genere*, and so not allowed to be determined and imposed by men, as things necessary *in genere* are allowed. 3. That either the whole nature of a Sacrament, or at least a part thereof, is in it.

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That it is a Sacrament, is thus proved It is an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual Grace. The outward sign is the representation of the Cross, the instrument of Christs sufferings; and the inward spiritual Grace is fortitude in the Christian warfare, according to the words of the Liturgy.

Here is a signification of Grace to be given us of God, and of our duty according to that Grace. Likewise this sign hath assigned unto it the moral efficacy of a Sacrament for working Grace, by teaching and exciting us to the spiritual warfare, and minding us of Christ crucified. Also it signifies and seals our Relation to Christ, or the Grace of being a Christian. And the Liturgy so speaks, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christs Flock, and sign him, &c. in token, &c.*

The pretence, that no rite can be a Sacrament, but what God hath instituted, is answered before, Sect. 4. And tho the imposers thereof, say it is not a Sacrament; yet if they so declare its meaning, as to be of the formal nature and reason of a Sacrament, they make it to be one indeed, tho in word they deny it.

If it were granted that it hath not the compleat or intire nature of a Sacrament, yet there is one essential part of a Sacrament most apparently in it, that is, to be an ingaging sign on our part in the Covenant. For we use it as a token of ingaging our selves to Christ crucified, as our Captain and Saviour, by his Cross; and to perform the duties of his Soldiers and Servants to our lives ends. And as Baptism dedicates to Christ, so doth the sign of the Cross, according to the express words of the Canon, *viz. It is an honourable badge, whereby the party Baptized is dedicated to the Service of him that dyed on the Cross.* So it hath that in it which is essential to a Sacrament, and part of the nature thereof at least.

Besides, it seems to be an Ordinance of that nature and kind, which Christ our Lawgiver hath reserved to himself from the reason in Sections 3, 4, 5.

#### § 12. Of Holy-days.

**T**HAT some time of every day is to be spent in Religious exercises, and that whole days of Humiliation and Thanksgiving are to be kept upon special occasions, and that there may be

an Anniversary commemoration of great Mercies or Judgments, is little doubted.

I see no reason why it is not lawful for a Nation or People to institute an Anniversary Commemoration of some eminent person sent of God as a great light among them, as the first propagator of the Gospel, or great Restorer of true Religion among them ; as of *Luther* among the *Germans*, and *Calvin* among the *French* Protestants. For scarce a greater blessing doth arise to a Nation.

Mr. R. B. saith, That an Apostolical Ministry being so eminent a mercy, he can see no reason why the Churches of all succeeding Ages may not keep an Anniversary day for *Peter* or *Paul*, &c. but he saith also, that whether it be lawful to separate an Anniversary for the commemoration of Christs Nativity, Circumcision, and such like things, &c. which were equally existent in the Apostles days, and the reasons for observing them then, equal with the following times, is hard for him to determine, being not able to prove it lawful, and yet not seeing a plain prohibition of it. Yet he gives these reasons of doubting their lawfulness. First, the occasions of these days were existent in the Apostles times ; and if God would have had these days observed, he could as easily and fitly have done it by his Apostles in the Scripture, as he did other like things. 2. If it were necessary, it would be equally necessary in all Ages and parts of the Catholick church, and therefore must be the matter of an universal Law ; and God hath made no such Law in Scripture ; and therefore to say it is necessary, is to overthrow the sufficiency of Scripture, as the Catholick Rule of Faith, and Universal Divine obedience. 3. God himself hath appointed a day for the same purposes as these are pretended for ; the Resurrection implies all the rest of the Works of the Redeemer. 4. The Fourth Commandment being one of the Decalogue, seems to be of so high a nature, that man is not to presume to make the like.

He accounts it plainly unlawful for any Earthly Power to appoint a Weekly day in commemoration of any part of our Redemption, and so make another stated Weekly Holy-day, because it is the doing of the same thing for one day, which God hath done by another ; and so seems an usurpation of power not given, and an accusation of Christ and the Holy Ghost, as if he had not done his Work sufficiently.

I think

I think it also an usurpation of Power not given for any Human Authority, to make any day or time permanently and unmoveably holy, as a perpetual oblation to God, and not only sanctified by the duties therein performed, but also sanctifying the duties, and making them the more acceptable.

But as to the observation, much more to the imposing of the observation of Holy-days of human institution, regard is to be had not only to what is lawful, but also to what is expedient. And it is as easie to offend by excess, as by defect, in the instituting of set-times and days appropriated to Divine Worship.

### § 13. Of a LITURGY.

ANY particular form, whether stinted or free, is not of the essence of prayer, but only its accidental shape or mode, and pertains to it not as to a holy action, but as to an action in general. And for that no action can be performed but in some particular mode or other, this holy action cannot otherwise be performed.

Now neither Scripture, nor the nature of the thing, hath made either a stated and stinted, or a free and extemporal form in it self necessary; and therefore either the one or the other may be used, as expedience requires, according to due choice and judgment. As on the one hand they are too weak and ill advised that reject all set-forms; so they on the other hand are too opinionative that reject all immediately conceived; yea, or preconceived forms that are not prescribed. And both of them shew, that they are too much addicted to their Parties.

### § 14. Of Religious Austerities, as acts or matter of Divine Worship.

THEre are Austerities inconvenient in their kind, such as the self cutting and lancing of Baals Priests, and such as the Popish Whippings, or such as some of the Ancients, with pious intention, but superstitiously used; as perpetual abiding on the top of a Pillar, never to sleep but standing, &c. And there are Austerities inconvenient for measure, by excess in that which is for kind sutable and comely, as immoderate Abstinences and Abasements;

ments; all such being to be rejected, come not into the present consideration: But the query is, Whether allowable Austerities may be not only adjuncts, but also acts or matter of Worship?

Humiliation or Prostration of soul in self abasement before God, is an act of internal Worship. And I do not see but the Austerities we now speak of, may be lawfully used as direct and immediate signs of such humiliation, and consequently as acts of Worship. Whatsoever is directly and immediately expressive of internal Worship, is external Worship. And so fasting and other abstinences may be esteemed not only as fit adjuncts of Worship, and helps therein, but acts thereof.

Vows of the aforesaid allowable Austerities, to be continued in for term of life, or notable length of time, are dangerous, and apt to insnare the Consciences; and if a special religious state be placed in them, more than what belongs to Christianity as such, they are Superstition and Will-worship.

Matri-

## MATRIMONIAL PURITY.

§ 1. **M**Arriage is the Bond of an individual Conjunction between Man and Woman, instituted of God to an individual Conversation or Course of Life. This Bond cannot be dissolved by man, because it is not man but God that makes it, tho the Married parties voluntarily enter into it, and publick Officers instrumentally authorize their Act according to Gods Law. Hence it is said, *Whom God hath joyned, let no man put asunder.* But this Rule puts no bar to Gods right of dissolving this Bond by an Act of his Law upon causes therein declared.

§ 1. By the Church of *Rome*, Matrimony is held a Sacrament upon this ground, That God hath consecrated it to be a Symbol of the indissoluble Conjunction of Christ with the Church, and of Grace to be conferred upon those that enter into it. Indeed it is used in Scripture as a similitude to express or illustrate the Mystical Union betwixt Christ and his Church: But every similitude used in Scripture to express a holy Mystery (as that of the Vine and Branches, to express the Union between Christ and the faithful), doth not thereby become a consecrated Symbol thereof, with a promise of Grace annexed to it, as so consecrated. Nevertheless, tho Matrimony be not an instituted Symbol of Divine Grace, yet Grace suitable to this state of Life is promised to the faithful; and this state (as all other things) is sanctified by the word of God and prayer, up, to those holy ends which God hath designed in it.

§ 3. The Causes for which Matrimony was ordained, are excellently set by the Church of *England* in these words. First, It

was ordained for the Procreation of Children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name. Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid Fornication, that such as have not the gift of continency might Marry and keep themselves undefiled Members of Christs Body. Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual Society, help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

It belongs to the substance of Matrimony, that the Man and the Woman give and take the power of their bodies mutually unto the conjugal due, called benevolence, 1 Cor. 7. 3, 4. And they are so equal in the matter of Wedlock, that both of them are both superior and inferior in asking and rendering the said due. Hence it is a resolved case, That sterillity is not an impediment of Marriage; because, tho the primary end, which is Procreation, be thereby hindred; yet the secondary end, to be a remedy against sin, which is also of Gods ordaining, is obtained: But Frigidity or total Impotency, is a just impediment, because in that case both the *primary* and *secondary* end of Marriage is made void, and the essential due thereof cannot be rendered.

§ 4. As concerning the ancient Polygamy, or plurality of Wives at once, some conceive that it was only by Divine connivence, and that it was a sinful practice, which God winked at. Others conceive that it was by Divine dispensation, and that the law of the Conjunction of one Man, and one Woman, was most consentaneous to nature; but that it was not in nature immutable and indispensible, but such as might be changed, the state of things and persons being changed; yet then not to be changed but by his authority from whom all the Laws of nature do proceed. But whether *Polygamy* were allowed, or only winked at, it appears to be wholly disallowed by the Law of Christ, and was never as yet admitted in any Christian Commonwealth. If according to the words of Christ, a Man putting away his Wife, and Marrying another, committeth Adultery; much more doth he commit Adultery, if keeping the former Wife he Marry another.

The Concubines mentioned in the *Old-Testament*, were not, as in our days, unmarried, but properly Wives, tho in respect of some Matrimonial Priviledges inferior to Wives, strictly so called.



called. For their carnal Conjunction with any besides him, whose they were, was a defiling of the Marriage-bed. Concerning *Reuben*, who lay with *Bilhah*, *Jacobs* Concubine, this is denounced, *Thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy Fathers bed, then defiledst thou it*, Gen. 49. 4.

§ 5. As concerning the honour of Matrimony, it is written, Heb. 13. 4. *Marriage is honourable among all men, and the bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judg.* This is the law of Christ. On the contrary, the hypocrisie, and the counteseit sanctity of those lyars, who were to bring in the great Apostacy upon the Christian Church, is foretold to consist, among other things, in forbidding to Marry, 1 *Tim.* 4. 3. And the prohibition of it to divers orders of men, and other unjust restrictions laid upon it, are one kind of the forbidding to Marry, intended in that prediction.

The wisest and most civilized Commonwealths, that were not Christians, have testified their great respect to Marriage, by encouraging it with many Priviledges, as more conducing to the publick good, than the single Life. By the *Roman Laws*, in times of Gentilism, Marriage was priviledged, and the single Life disadvantaged.

§ 6. The debasing of Matrimony, came in with the degeneracy of the Church. Quickly after the Apostles age, Christians departed from the simplicity that is in Christ, by devising rules of Life which Christ required not; and built upon the precious foundation, which had been laid, Wood, Hay, and Stubble. And the Devotion both of men and women was carried forth to a self-devised religiousness, yet the essentials of Christianity were preserved sound.

Accordingly many of the Fathers of the Church extolled Celibate and Virginity with excessive praises; and thought of Marriage, as of a state less perfect; and some of them, as *Jerome*, were almost contumelious against it. Yet in those times some appeared to give some check to those contumelies cast upon Marriage.

When Christianity obtained the Empire, those Laws which were made in special favour of Marriage, and disadvantage of single Life, were abrogated; and the Monastick state was great-

ly propagated and privileged. Yea, in later times Married persons were encouraged to forsake their yokefellows, and go into Monasteries.

§ 7. Upon this occasion, I am led to consider, what worth or excellence in celibate and virginity, more than in the Married Life, can be shewed from the Holy Scripture, or from right reason.

In the Scripture we find no greater excellence ascribed to single continence, than to Matrimonial chastity. It is said, 1 Cor. 7. 1. *It is good for a man not to touch a Woman.* The goodness here spoken of, is a moral convenience; and in that respect to abstain from Marriage is here said to be καλόν, or vertuous. For it is vertuous to chosse that which is most commodious to Christian life, and to avoid all avoidable hinderances of the freer exercise of godliness. Now divers cares and troubles which accompany Marriage, may well be avoided by one who hath the special gift of continence. And those difficulties and sufferings which come upon us in times of the Churches calamities, may be better borne, and the temptations thereof more easily escaped in a single, than in a Married Life.

In the same Chapter, *vers.* 25, 26. Virginity is commended, not from its intrinsick excellency (as far as that appears), but from its conveniency, in regard of the distresses of the Church. The Apostle saith, *It is good for the present distress.* Here also he useth the word καλόν, which shews, that the thing is vertuously good; but upon what account? *Διὰ τὴν ἰνέσῳσαν ἀνάγκην.* It had in that state of things a Moral convenience, and therefore to make choice of it was vertuous. Yet he shews, *vers.* 28. that to Marry in such a time, is no sin, tho not to Marry be more expedient. Likewise, *vers.* 32, 33, 34. and so to the end of the Chapter, single Life is preferred before Marriage, by reason of its convenience, and on no other account.

§ 8. Marriage was instituted for man in the state of innocence. And it must needs be acknowledgeed by all, that in that state it would have been altogether as pure and perfect as Celibate and Virginity. If Matrimony, by reason of the fall be accompanied with some unavoidable irregularities, or inordinate motions

in the sensitive Nature, single life is a like, yea perhaps more obnoxious in that respect.

Matrimonial chastity is as truly chastity, as Virginal chastity. And the same degree of Matrimonial chastity is equally pure, with the same degree of Virginal chastity ; or to speak in other terms, there may be as great chastity both of body and mind in Matrimony, as in Virginity.

If there be a glory and excellency in that Victory over sense, which they have, who having the gift of continence, abstain from the sensitive pleasure of the Marriage-bed ; it may be equalled by the sobriety and regularity of the use of the Marriage bed, being accompanied with a Christian Wisdom, Fortitude, and Patience in bearing and managing the difficulties of the Married condition, for the glory of God, and the good of the Church and Commonwealth, besides the private good of Families. And there appears much less self-denial in a single, than in a married life, to be exercised by those that have the gift of continence.

§ 9. Principles tending to render Marriage vile and loathsome, have been propagated by some out of an excessive admiration of Virginity, and total abstinence from carnal conjunction ; and by others, whose interest it was to inhanse the reputation of single life, for the strengthening of the Papal Kingdom. Of which sort are these, viz. The natural desire of copulation is prohibited lust : That corporeal delight may not be intended in the conjugal act : That a mans desire of pleasure with his own Wife cannot be without sin : That a man doth sin, except he come to the act with grief. Accordingly some Popish Writers have said, That most frequently mortal sin, and always venial sin, is committed in the conjugal act. And the truth is, if these things were true, they were enough to deter from Marriage all those that have a due care of their own souls.

Some of great name among the Ancients held, That there should have been no commixtion of Sexes in the state of innocence, because tho it were used for procreation alone, yet ( as they thought ) it could not have been without shameful lust.

§ 10. Now for the redargation of such opinions, let it be considered, that when men otherwise very worthy, shall give scope to their own conceits, and shall advance self-chosen ways, they will  
over-

overlook the clearest evidence both of Scripture and Reason. For what other cause could be rendered for the creation of the different Sexes, but the foresaid commixtion? And of a man and his wife in the state of innocence it was said, *They shall be one flesh*. And for the vehement desire of the said conjunction, it is in it self an Animal Faculty for the conservation of the Species, as the like desire of ingestion and egestion is for the conservation of the individual.

Since the Fall, the sensitive appetite ought to be distinguished from its inordinacy, from which by grace it may be separated, and so it may be alike pure and sinless with other parts of human nature in this imperfect state. And this being granted in other kinds of sensitive appetite, why should it be denied in the kind here treated of? Some say of it, That it is a brutifying act; and that the mind is so carried away therein, that it can think nothing worthy of a wise man. But I make no question, but godly persons know the contrary by experience. And I can see no reason, but that they who have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts ( as all true Christians have ) may by due care carry themselves in this matter with a due sobriety and regularity, and that the more perfect Christians ordinarily do so. And tho herein they be not perfectly, yet they are prevalently pure. And that it is perfectly pure, can scarce be said of any good act in the present state of mankind. The delight of eating and drinking after hunger and thirst, or of rest after labour, doth swallow up Reason in the Vicious, or more or less disturb it, according to the degree of their intemperance. And so the delight here considered, doth swallow up Reason in them that use it inordinately, and that more or less, according to the degree of their inordinacy. But as the delight of eating and drinking doth not bruise the temperate; so the delight here considered, doth not brutifie them that use it purely and soberly, not in opposition, but subordination to spiritual delights.

§ 11. Indeed it is undeniable, and witnessed by the common sense of human nature, that since the Fall a shameful turpitude doth inseparably adhere to this act. And this is a natural intimation to mankind of their vicious propagation in their fallen state ( I mean in respect of original sin ) and a manifest sign of the common viciousness and brutishness in this case, as also of the impotence

potence of passion or sensual commotion, to which all are obnoxious herein, and ordinarily more than in other sensualities, if it be not carefully brought under the due governance of reason. Wherefore that *Cynical* impudence which some are reported to have acted herein, is to be abhorred of all men. And even Human, much more Christian modesty, requires the greatest reservedness herein. Nevertheless, this inseparably adhering turpitude is not always and directly, or of it self a sinfulness. That there is a natural, where there is not a sinful turpitude, many instances do shew. That many things just, and honest, and necessary, have a kind of shamefulness in them, is acknowledged by men in general. If in the present instance there be always some sinfulness, it is no other than what is found in all the good acts of men in this their imperfect state. And those acts are not counted nor called sins by reason of such adhering sinfulness, for that they are prevalently, tho not perfectly good and virtuous.

§ 12. Continence in single life is not a common, but a special gift, which all have not received, *Mat. 19 10, 11.* When the Disciples said, If the case of a man be so with his Wife, it is good not to marry; Our Saviour answered, *All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.* And v. 12. *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.* The Apostle saith, *2 Cor. 7. 7.* *I would that every man were even as my self; but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that.* And of the unmarried and Widows he speaks, *If they cannot contain, let them marry.* This shews that all have not that singular gift from God to preserve themselves in pureness of body and spirit, without the remedy of Marriage. And nothing can be produced from Scripture or Reason to argue that the bare want of the said singular gift is a sinful incontinence. The general *impetus* of nature to the conjunction of Male and Female, is necessary to the perpetuating of mankind. And if it were not so generally implanted in nature, there is reason to think, that considering the many great intanglements and molestations that accompany Marriage, many would not encumber themselves therewith, and so would refuse to serve the Providence of God, in the successive Generations of men upon Earth, in that regular way of Procreation, which he hath appointed for mankind from the beginning.

And

And who knows, but in the state of Innocence, as there might be vehement Hunger and Thirst, so there might be an *impetus* of Nature to this conjunction? I suppose that in the state of innocence, the motions of the sensitive appetite would not be raised, and laid immediately, at the call of the rational appetite; but from the sensitive nature it self, as the immediate source and spring from which they issue, and to which they return. Yet I firmly hold, that in that state, the said motions were so perfectly under the government of the rational appetite, doing its Office, as thereby to be always diverted from whatsoever would be dishonest. But I think, that that good government must have been maintained by prudence and diligence; not indeed with trouble and difficulty (as now it is), but with a pleasant and facile industry. In case of Hunger and Thirst, Innocent nature might admit a simple motion of sense to Eat and Drink in a time unseasonable for such an act; but Reason, and the rational appetite, would so bridle it, that no irregular act of Mind or Body should follow.

§ 13. In the want of the gift of continence, legitimate Matrimony is the remedy appointed of God, 1 Cor. 7. 1. *It is good for a man not to touch Woman. Nevertheless to avoid Fornication, let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband.* The meaning whereof is, Tho in divers respects it be more convenient to be unmarried; yet there is one respect of greater moment, which commands the use thereof, viz. to avoid Fornication. And vers. 9. *It is better to Marry than to burn.* God doth not give to all, to overcome the inordinacy of carnal desire, without Marriage, where it may be duly had; and such as cannot otherwise overcome the said inordinacy, must Marry if they can, to keep themselves pure in Body and Mind, or (as 'tis expressed in the Liturgy), *undefiled Members of Christs Body.*

§ 14. They who are unavoidably kept from Marriage, or being in Wedlock are deprived of conjugal imbraces by their yoke-fellows infirmities, or necessary absence, must rely upon God for strength to repress inordinate motions, and to keep themselves in that purity of heart and life, which is acceptable to him. For the necessary help of his Grace is never wanting to those that



that use his means, and keep within the bounds which he hath set.

God will not have his order broken, nor his universal perpetual law transgressed, (such as the Law of Marriage is) to satisfy mens natural desires. But when they are debarred of Gods appointed remedy, or when they have used it, but are by his providence frustrated of the benefit thereof, they must not transgress the limits which he hath set them; but they must have patience, and strive against nature, and expect such relief from Gods Grace, as shall be sufficient for them.

§ 15. To be regulated by those Laws which God hath set in Nature and Scripture, is mans uprightness; but to depart from them to self-devised ways, is his sin and folly, under a shew of Wisdom; and by pleasing himself therein, he deviates more and more from the right way. The general admiring of Monckery and Vows of single Life, hath as much contributed to the corruption of the Christian Religion, and the advancing of the Antichristian Impurity and Superstition, as any institution or custom that ever was taken up in the Christian Church.

Howbeit some may be called to single Life for Religions sake, according to the Words of our Saviour, Matt. 19. 12. *There be Eunuchs, which have made themselves Eunuchs for the kingdom of Heavens sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.* Such as clearly know, they have received the gift above mentioned, may be called of God to single Life, to employ themselves more freely in serving God, either in a publick or private calling. All that are so gifted, are not hereunto called; because many of them may be required to glorify God, and do good in a Married state, either in respect of their own Families, or the Commonwealth. But in regard there be few comparatively, who have received this gift, it is most rationally supposed, that they who have received it, should make use of it (yet not under the constraint of a Vow, but freely) for those holy and good ends which are best obtained by it, except some special reason, as aforesaid, doth oblige them to Marry. But let them know, that in using their gift, they do no more than what is their duty to do. The distinction between Counsels and Precepts in this and other matters, is but vain. For it is the bounden duty of all, to do their utmost for the Glo-

ry of God, and their own, and others good.

§ 16. As self-devised religiousness by degrees increased among Christians, accordingly many rigorous Prohibitions and Limitations about Marrying, both groundless and unreasonable, were devised. Many of the Ancients, both Fathers of the Church, and Hereticks, were averse to, or at least not much pleased with second successive Marriages, either in Clergy or Laity. And some degree of Penance for the same was enjoined by the Canons of some Councils.

The Scripture saith, *Marriage is honourable in all*, without exception; thereby shewing, that no condition of life puts a bar to it, against those who are capable of it. And if no condition of Life be a bar thereunto, why should former Marriages be so? The Scripture expressly asserts the lawfulness of second Marriages, *Rom. 7. 3. If a Woman, while her husband lives, be married to another, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law: so that she is no adulteress, tho she be married to another man.* St. Paul saith of Widows, *2 Cor. 7. 9. If they cannot contain, let them marry.* *Verf. 39. A Wife is bound by the law, as long as her husband lives: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord.*

Those young Widows, whose Marriage is condemned, *1 Tim. 5. 11, 12.* were such as had devoted themselves to the service of the Church, according to the manner of those times. And they are said to have Condemnation, not simply because they married, but because they cast off their first faith, that is, they did violate their engagement to Christ, and the Church, to please the flesh. Upon this ground the Apostle forbids the admitting of younger Women into that special Ministry, that they might not be exposed to such temptation. And *verf. 14.* he expressly wills, *That the younger women should marry;* which must necessarily include young Widows also; because it is brought in immediately after the condemning of young Widows in case of prevarication against their aforesaid engagement. His meaning is to shew, that it is most convenient for them to Marry in regard of their age and condition; yet not to bind any absolutely so to do.

Some of the Ancients thought the Apostle granted second Marriages only *ex Venia*, by way of indulgence or dispensation; so that he who used it, sinned not, as being not forbidden by the Law; but he did not fulfil that high perfection of Life that the Gospel calls unto. But herein such indulged their own opinion; and I find that they were in other things very fanciful, and over-rigorous in their Principles, and somewhat Stoical. But the Evangelical Law, or the New Testament, hath not so declared.

The prohibiting of second Marriages, tends to the diminution of mankind, and the weakning of Commonwealths, with other inconveniences.

§ 17. Successive Marriages more often reiterated, had a greater ill name among the Ancients. But those places of Scripture which license Widows to marry, do it indefinitely, without limitation, to a Widow of the first Husband only. And we find in Scripture no restraint against third, fourth, or more Marriages. And according to reason, if a Widow of the first Husband may lawfully Marry, why not also a Widow of the second Husband, seeing there may be the same justifiable cause of Marriage? Indeed there may be an excess in the reiterating of successive Marriages; but then the dishonesty or sinfulness lies not in the Reiteration of the Marriage in it self considered, but in the excess, as undecent and uncomely. The allowable frequency of such Reiteration, is not punctually defined in general, and a like to all; but is varied according to the different cases of persons. In the case propounded by the Sadduces to our Saviour of seven Brethren successively married to one Woman, *Matt. 22. 25.* he speaks nothing of the illegitimacy or unsoundness of the said Marriages. The case of the Samaritan Woman, *Joh. 4.* is to be considered. Our Saviour doth tax her for living at that time with one as a husband, who indeed was not her husband; but he doth not expressly reprove her former plurality of successive Husbands; nor do I observe that he puts any note of sinfulness upon it; yet for ought I know, there might be sinfulness in the undecent excess thereof.

The Papists say, That the Catholick Church allows second and third Marriages, and in whatsoever number successively; yet the benediction ought not to be allowed to such Marriages,

because the Consecration ought not to be reiterated. But this denial of the benediction, and the ill reflection it hath upon second Marriages, is founded upon an error, that Marriage is a Sacrament, and consecrated to be a Symol of the Mystical Union between Christ and the Church.

§ 18. Seeing the gift of Continence in single Life, is the Priviledg of particular persons, and not of certain Orders and Callings of men, a Vow or other Obligation to single Life, should not be laid upon all that enter into some special Callings; but particular persons should be left free therein to marry, or abstain from Marriage, as they find themselves qualified, and called to the one, or the other.

That Marriage is lawful and honest in the Ministers of the Gospel, is evident from Scripture, against all prejudices arising from customs introduced, or Canons made in after-ages. That one evidence, that among the qualifications of a Bishop, it is mentioned that he be the Husband of one Wife, is clear and full against all contradiction. As *Peter* had a Wife, so *Paul* shews that he had power to take a Wife, even in his Apostleship, 2 Cor. 9. 5. *Have we not power to lead about a Sister, a Wife, as well as the other Apostles?* By a Sister he means a believing Christian; by leading about a Sister, a Wife, he means living in Matrimony.

That disease of our fallen nature, for which Marriage is appointed a remedy, is common to all sorts; and therefore the remedy should be as common. And, as is before noted, the gift of Continence is a priviledg of particular persons, and not of certain Orders and Callings.

Marriage is in it self no more impure to the Clergy, than to the Laity, *Ti. 1. 15. Unto the pure all things are pure.* There is no Estate or Calling polluted by Marriage, or made less holy; or less worthy by the use of it; for it is honourable in all men. And it is to be considered, that Gods Law binds every Christian to live as chastly and purely, as a Priest or Minister of the Gospel. And that which doth not lessen the holiness of a Christian, doth not lessen the holiness of a Minister. Indeed Ministers are more strongly obliged than others to keep themselves chaste in body and mind; because, whereas others are under a single, they are under a double Obligation therunto, both as they are Christians, and as they are Christs Ministers. But the

the chastity to which they are obliged, is the common duty of all Christians. Only where there is a greater engagement to chastity, there is a greater aggravation of the sin of uncleanness. And it concerns Ministers more than others, that they break not the Common Laws of Christianity in this regard, because thereby they give a greater scandal than others.

Moreover, Marriage is no more a hinderance to Ministers, than to all Christians in their acts of devotion. For all are required to exercise themselves unto godliness, to pray always, watching thereunto with all perseverance. And such exercises as require abstinence from conjugal embraces (as extraordinary prayer, with fasting) do alike concern Clergy and Laity. Notwithstanding this evidence of Scripture and Reason for the Honesty of Marriage in the Clergy, the Policy of Hypocrites, and the Superstition of honest minds, hath so far prevailed against it; as to make it no better than Incest, and worse than Fornication.

§ 19 There is no more reason to restrain the Clergy from second Marriages, than from the first. For there is commonly as great reason impelling to a second Marriage, as to the first. And there is no more impurity or uncomeliness in the second Marriages of Clergy-men, than in the first. The Matrimonial acts of second Marriages, have no more blemish nor unseemliness in them, than those of the first.

There is no reason to restrain the Clergy more than the Laity, from second Marriages. For if it may be sanctified to the one, it may as well be sanctified to the other also; if it may be necessary for the one, it may be also as necessary for the other. And the Matrimonial acts of second Marriages are no more uncomely in a Clerick, than in a Laick. No reason can be given why there ought not to be as great a chastity in every Christian, as in a Bishop. Every Christian is in a true sense a Priest to God, and a devoted person.

The Priests under the Law were expressly forbidden to take a Wife that was a Whore, or prophane, or a woman put away from her Husband, *Lev. 21. 7.* And good reason there might be for prohibiting a Priests marriage with a divorced woman, because the Law of Divorce was but of divine sufferance to the *Jews*, for the hardness of their hearts, as our Saviour saith. The High-Priest was expressly forbidden to marry a Widow, *Num. 14.* Some of the said Prohibi-

Prohibitions were most probably in reference to a ceremonial sanctity peculiar to the *Mosaic* dispensation. But neither the High Priest, nor other Priests were forbidden to marry a second Wife upon the death of the first.

I see no reason to conceive, that by the Text *1 Tim. 3. 2.* any thing is forbidden in a Bishop which is lawful in other Christians. By the husband of one Wife the Apostle means, one that is not married to two Wives at once, according to the custome of the *Jews* and other Eastern Nations; and one that hath not married a second Woman after he hath put away the first without lawful cause; or that hath not taken one that was unlawfully put away by another, according to the custom of the Western Nations.

§ 29. The forbidding of the innocent party to marry after a just divorce, was another groundless and unreasonable prohibition. Now the crime of adultery is the ground of a just divorce. *Matt. 19. 9. Whosoever putteth away his Wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.* Here the putting away of a Wife, and the marrying of another, is declared to be the committing of Adultery, except it be for Fornication. This by the most unquestionable Rule of interpretation shews, that if a man put away his Wife for Fornication, and marry another, he doth not commit adultery. For this is the case expressly excepted from the general proposition, and therefore exempt from the guilt therein expressed; and unless such an exemption were thereby signified, the exception were in vain. And it is to be further noted, that the excepting of the case of Fornication, must refer more especially to the later clause of marrying another, because by the bare putting away of a Wife in any case, without proceeding further, there is no committing of Adultery. Therefore it is the marrying of another in the said case of exception, that is designed to be exempted from the said guilt. Hereupon those general propositions about the same matter, *Mark 10. Luke 16.* must according to a just interpretation be limited by the exception here expressed, which must be necessarily there understood.

Howbeit upon an unjust divorce, for the innocent or injured party to marry another, we do not find it lawful. For Christ declares, *Matt. 5. 21. Whosoever putteth away his Wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whoso-*



*whoſoever marrieth her that is divorced, committeth adultery.* Here he ſeems to reſolve, That he is an Adulterer that marrieth the innocent party that is put away; and that the firſt contracted relation is not diſſolved by the unjuſt divorce; and that the woman unjuſtly put away, ought to ſtay unmarried in hope of being reconciled to her husband, until ſuch time as his Adultery in any kind, and in particular in the marrying of another Wife, doth ſet her at liberty.

§ 21. For the further clearing of the point here diſcuſſed, it is to be noted in what ſenſe the Marriage-bond is diſſolved, and in what ſenſe it is not diſſolved by Adultery. Certain it is, that the ſaid bond is not diſſolved *ipſo facto* by the ſaid crime, ſo that the conjugal relation immediately ceaſeth, and conjugal familiarity thenceforth becomes unlawful. Nevertheless the bond is ſo far diſſolved, that the offending-party hath forfeited the relation, and all the conſequent Rights thereof, and the injured party is no longer bound to continue the relation, and the conſequent duties thereof, if he will take the forfeiture; and ſo the bond is actually diſſolved, and the relation ceaſeth by his will: yet he is bound to proceed in it regularly, and according to publick order.

Whereas it is ſaid by many, That the allowed divorce doth not ſignifie the breaking of the conjugal bond in the ſubſtance, but a relaxation thereof as to conjugal duties; it to be noted, that the queſtion put to our Saviour by the Pharifees, was about putting away as to the Matrimonial bond. For there was no other putting away among the *Jews*, nor among the *Romans*, nor other Nations among whom Divorce was in uſe. Beſides, to ſpeak of a putting away, and of a being at liberty from bed and board, and all Matrimonial duties, and yet not from the bond of Matrimony, is but idle talk. The ſtate is diſſolved where all the obligations conſequent to ſuch a ſtate are abrogated. Moreover the Pa-piſts themſelves allow the diſſolving of a Marriage with ſuch an Infidel as will not cohabit without uſing continually againſt Chriſt, and ſeeking to turn the yokeſellow from Chriſt. And is not Adultery, eſpecially if continued, as juſt a cauſe of the diſſolution, ſeeing this cauſe is expreſſed in Gods Law, whereas the other is not? And whereas they ſay there is not the ſame firmneſs in the marriage of Infidels, as of Chriſtians; this they ſpeak without proof,

proof, and against the Law of God, which hath made Matrimony as inviolable among Infidels, as among Christians. This is a Divine Ordinance belonging not to the Church only, but to all mankind.

§ 22. As touching the allowableness of another Marriage to the innocent party in case of a declared wilful desertion by the other, we find this written, 1 Cor. 7. 15. *If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother and sister is not under bondage in such cases.* It is hence gathered by some, that in a Marriage between a believer and an unbeliever, in case the unbelieving party depart out of hatred to true Religion, and if the believing party hath used all possible and reasonable means to reduce the other to a due Conjunction, and hath staid a convenient time for that purpose, and cannot prevail therein, he is loosed from this bond. This inference from the Text, seems to me highly probable, that I cannot disallow it. Many Reformed Churches have determined this, and applied it further to other cases of obstinate desertion, besides this before mentioned; that the matter being judged by the Magistrate, the Innocent party may Marry another. As for the prohibition, Vers. 11. *If she depart, let her remain unmarried;* therein another Marriage is forbidden only to such as voluntarily depart. It is to be noted, that there may be a just voluntary departing, which is not of the same reason with a just divorce.

§ 23. *Abishag*, who was sought for *David*, to cherish him in his extream age, 1 King. 1. 2. was his Concubine, that is, not his Harlot, but his lawful Wife, in a secondary degree, or inferior rank. I mean lawful, only by Gods permission or connivence, in regard of his plurality of Wives at once, according to the custom of the ancient times; yet lawful by Divine Approbation, in case he had had no other Wife then in being. From this example, it is at least probable that it is not a sin in it self in extream old age to take a Wife as a cherishing Nurse, or a bosom companion. For the declared intent of *Dauids* taking *Abishag*, was that she might lie in his bosom, and cherish him in his age, when he could get no heat. And it is said, *That she cherished him, but he knew her not.*

§ 24. The Bed undefiled, *Heb.* 13. 4. is that which is not defiled with Adultery, Fornication, or any kind of unchastity or unsoberness. To the maintaining of which undefiledness, and the avoiding of all uncleanness, Christians are greatly obliged by the purity of their Religion. Here I design to speak of uncleanness not without, but within the bounds of Matrimony, and to give caution against all corrupt behaviour between a Man and his own Wife; because men are commonly least aware of this evil; and because this is the Damnation of multitudes, who defile not themselves with strange embraces; and while they think they live chastely, do securely allow themselves in very great breaches of the laws of chastity. To keep the Bed undefiled, it is necessary to observe, not only the due object of Conjunction, or the legitimate person; but all due circumstances of time, place, measure, manner, &c. For inordinate sensuality or lust, is not excused by being acted between persons lawfully married. The honesty and honour of Matrimony cannot make that to be lawful and honest, which is in it self dishonest and sinful. All manner of lust or evil concupiscence, and the imperated acts thereof, are forbidden by the Law.

§ 25. There be divers ways of abusing the Marriage-bed, between a Man and his own Wife, whereof some are more foul and gross than others. There be nefarious irregulations that some fall into by unbridled lust. There are preternatural ways, by which humane nature cannot be propagated, and which are justly to be abhorred by all, who have not lost the sense of humanity. Moreover a man may come to his Wife, as to a Harlot, with a spirit of Whoredom, and seek a brutish pleasure, which extinguisheth the fear of God. Such excess as doth notably impair the health of the Body, or vitiate the mind, and make it more carnal, is unquestionably to be avoided, and will be avoided by those that are careful to keep a sound state of body or mind.

§ 26. It is by all confessed, that in two cases the conjugal embraces are without fault: first, when they are for the sake of Procreation; secondly, when the due is rendred to the yoke-fellow requiring it. The reason of the former is, because then

the action is referred to the primary end for which Matrimony was ordained. The reason of the later is, because it is an Act of Justice; that being rendred to another, which is his right. For herein the married parties have a mutual power over each other, 2 Cor. 7. Yet be it always minded, that even in the said cases, it must be regulated by the Rules of Christian Purity.

Some have said, That the use of the Marriage-bed, without respect to Procreation of Children, is base or unclean. And some chief Schoolmen have determined, that the use thereof, to allay the inordinancy of carnal desire, or to avoid Fornication, when Procreation is not designed, is a sin, tho but a Venial sin. This requires our animadversion.

§ 27. Among the ends of Marriage, this is one, and a principal one, and which renders it necessary, viz. To be a remedy against Fornication, or against burning, that is the inordinancy of carnal desire, 1 Cor. 7. 2. *Nevertheless to avoid Fornication, let every man have his own Wife, and every Woman have her own Husband.* Vers. 9. *If they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.* Now if this end of Marriage be so momentous, as to make it necessary in this case; Certainly the use of the Marriage-bed for this end cannot be sin. That which God hath ordained for the cure of this disease commonly adhering to fallen nature, cannot be sin, being used to that end, tho the disease it self, which is the occasion of it, be not without sin. Moreover, that cannot be sin which the Apostle directs men to make use of to avoid Satans temptations to sin. But the Apostle directs to the use of the Marriage-bed, as a preventive remedy against Satans temptations to incontinency, 2 Cor. 7. 5. *Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that you may give your selves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

If a mans case be such, that without the use of Marriage, Fornication, or other bodily uncleanness, or inward impurity of desires and motions, cannot be ordinarily avoided by him; and if in that case, it be his duty to marry, then the avoiding of Fornication, or other impurity, corporeal or mental, is one lawfull

lawful and honest end of the use of the Marriage-bed, even when there is no power of procreation; and the procreation of children is not always necessary to be respected therein.

§ 28. When there be several lawful and necessary ends of the use of Marriage, *viz.* procreation, and the avoiding of fornication or burning, it is not necessary that the later of the said ends should be always conjunct with, and referred to the former; but it may be sometimes separate and independent thereon. For the said ends are not things subordinate, but coordinate; each of them is intended for it self, and the one is not in meer subserviency to the other. It is granted, that the former end is more noble, as being necessary to Nature in it self considered; and the later less noble, as being made necessary by Nature fallen. Yet it doth not appear from Scripture or right Reason, that the use of the Marriage-bed is sinful and impure in the less noble, yet necessary end thereof, upon the failing of the other, which is the more noble. The truth is, as the state of man is since the Fall, there is no end of Marriage of greater moment, than the preserving of Chastity; and the due benevolence, 1 Cor. 7. is one of the essential dues of Marriage.

Let it be here noted, that they who hold the use of the Marriage-bed without respect to procreation, to be sin, do hold it no sin in that case to render the due benevolence when required, because it is a point of justice. But if this thing be a sin on the demanders part, the rendering of it cannot be a due. It is granted, there may be a sinful demanding of a just debt; and in that case the rendering of that which is sinfully demanded, is a point of justice; but it is not so, if the very thing demanded be the sin of the demander. For sin cannot be a matter of right; and there can be no obligation of Justice to cooperate to anothers sin. And therefore if the rendering of this benevolence be a righteousness, the demand thereof is righteous, and the thing demanded is no sin.

§ 29. They who reject the aforesaid end, and condemn the aforesaid use of Marriage, which is clearly justified, 1 Cor. 7. 2, 3, 4, 5 do alledge that which is said *ver. 6. This I speak by permission, not of commandment.* Wherein they say the Apostle by way of pardon grants the use of lust within the bounds of Ma-

trimony. Hereupon the true intent of those words is to be examined. The word *συγγώμην* is used both for permission, and for pardon; and here it is evidently used for permission, being opposed to *ἐπιταγήν* commandment; and it signifies not the remitting of a fault, but the-allowing of an honest liberty, as contradistinct to the injoining of duty. The Apostle's meaning is, that he doth not injoin Marriage, or the use of the Marriage-due, as a general duty (for he wishes that all men were as himself) but allows it as a lawful benefit. And not only so, but he doth prescribe it as a remedy against sin, for those that have need of it, in which case it becomes a duty.

To say that the use of lust is here granted within the bounds of Matrimony, is, I think, an imputation too foul to cast upon the word of God; and for it to grant by way of pardon the committing of a lesser sin, that some greater sin may be avoided, seems to derogate from its perfect purity. Never was any moral evil permitted by Gods Moral Law, upon the reason of avoiding a greater evil. The permission of Divorce among the *Jews*, was but political, and did of it self amount to no more than a legal impunity in that Commonwealth. For the Divorcing of a Wife might be a mortal sin notwithstanding. *Mal. 2. 16. The Lord God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away.* Moreover if the Apostles *συγγώμην* must needs signify Pardon, let them who will have it so, shew cause why it must not be applied as well to the rendering, as to the demanding of the conjugal due. For whatsoever the sense of the word be, neither the express Text, nor rational interpretation doth carry it to one part, excluding the other. But themselves deny that the rendering of the due doth need pardon.

§ 13. It is common with those who are loose in the Commandments of God, to be very severe in the Traditions of men; according to this kind of principle Popish Writers hold, that the intendment of corporeal delight in the use of Marriage, is a sin; and that it is not without fault if it be done partly for procreation, and partly for pleasure, tho the pleasure be not chiefly intended. What strange rigor is here imposed upon mankind against human nature it self, to make it sin for a man to be affected with desire of pleasure in the fruition of his own Wife? If sensitive pleasure be naturally connex with the innate appetite, the intended fruition thereof can be no more sin, than Nature



it self. Yea, let these rigid Imposers think, whether the non-fruition, or non-intendment of that which is inseparable from sensitive Nature, be naturally possible, and consequently whether according to this principle, the procreation which they allow, must not necessarily be accounted sin. These and the like opinions greatly detract from the purity and honour of Marriage, and manifestly lessen the impurity and dishonour of Whoredome, by making Marriage it self so vile and faulty; and consequently they intangle the consciencious sort of men in causeless scruples, and imbolden the licentious in dissolute ways. The truth of the case is, That if Pleasure be ultimately intended in this or any other act of the Animal Nature, it is a mortal sin; but if it be intended in subserviency to holy and spiritual ends, it is no sin at all. Pleasure, and Lust, which is the inordinacy of Pleasure, are very different things. Lust, tho it keep within the bounds of Marriage, is in it self ever dishonest and repugnant to Reason, and cannot be venial, as the Papists hold it to be.

The truth is, the aforesaid Doctrines of Popish Writers do but serve, according to their known design, to debase Marriage, and render it a less desirable, yea a more unsafe state to the strictly consciencious, that they might inhanse the estimate of single life. The Church of *England* hath otherwise determined in this case, That Marriage was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid Fornication: That such persons as have not the gift of Continence, might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christs body. Which shews, that to marry for the said end, is not an yielding to Lust, but a means of that Chastity which becomes the members of Christ to have.

§ 31. Marriage being ordained, 1. For procreation of Children: 2. For a remedy against sin: 3. For that mutual society, help and comfort that is necessary in this Animal life of mankind here upon earth, the sober and regular use of the marriage-bed, in order to any necessary help and comfort, doth not defile the conscience, but is sanctified to the pure and consciencious, even then when respect to procreation, or the avoiding of sin, doth not urge it. Particularly, it is no way against Chastity or Christian purity, to use it for that necessary health of body which is evidently promoted by it, and especially if probably it cannot be well procured without it.

§ 32. It hath been judged by some of the Ancients, to be not only sinful, but nefarious for a man to lye with his Wife while she is with child. But I find not this utterly forbidden in Scripture, either expressly, or by manifest consequence. As for the judgment of Reason about it, these things may be considered, 1. That by Divine perpetual Ordinance towards mankind, one Male is confined to one Female; whereas other creatures are not so limited. 2. Conception is not only the end of this duty; for it is to be rendered to those that are barren. 3. That, wherein the brutes are led by natural propension, in man falls under the government of Reason. And in the present case it seems reasonable, that the sensitive desire either be gratified or denied, as Reason guided by the general Rules of Gods word, doth shew what is most expedient within the limits of goodness and honesty. This may certainly be determined, That if Congress in this case will destroy the *Fœtus*, whosoever useth it, sinneth greatly and heinously. And if there be danger of destroying it, he that useth it, exposeth himself to the danger of great and heinous sin.

§ 33. It is most certain, that there are times and occasions wherein abstinence from the marriage-bed is strictly enjoined. The Precept forbidding to approach carnally to a woman in the time of that known infirmity which is common to that Sex, was not merely *Mosaical*, but moral, that is universal and perpetual, as appears *Lev.* 18. 19, 24. *Lev.* 20 18, 23. For the breach thereof is noted as one of the abominable practices of those Nations which were not under the *Mosaick* institutions; for which practices God took vengeance on them, by casting them out before his people.

§ 24. The more solemn times of Prayer and Fasting, require abstinence from all manner of sensitive pleasures, tho in themselves lawful and honest; and particularly from conjugal embraces, 1 Cor. 7. 5. *Defraud not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that you may give your selves to fasting and prayer.* It is not said, that you may pray, but that ye may give yourselves to Fasting and Prayer; which imports a solemn setting of themselves apart to extraordinary Prayer, with Fasting.

§ 35. Not only solemn Religious Fasting, but other such high and solemn acts of Religion as require the greatest raising of the mind in spiritual cogitations, and retirement to converse with God; and consequently the best preparedness of body and mind, do also require abstinence from the heightened delights of the sensitive or animal part. For which cause abstinence from conjugal embraces is most requisite for some due space of time before and after the participation of the Holy Sacrament. And I think this abstinence ought also to be observed on the Lords day for the same reason. When the people were to meet with God in that extraordinary way upon Mount Sinai, *Moses* gave it them in charge as a part of their preparation for it, That they come not at their Wives, *Exod.* 19. 15.

§ 36. Yet the ordinary daily exercises of Religion, and Holy walking before God in them, do not require the like abstinence. A sober and regular use of Marriage, as of all other delights pertaining to the Animal life, doth not render any man unfit for the daily Service of God. With reference hereunto the Apostle speaks, *1 Tim.* 4. 4, 5. *Every creature of God (and so every Ordinance of God) is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer.*

Howbeit with this concession a caution also must here be given, That the married must so cohabit, that their prayers be not hindered or polluted, *1 Pet.* 3. 7. And because prayer is a daily duty, they must daily manage their mutual converse, so as not to be indisposed to, or diverted from this or any other daily exercise of Religion. Wherefore they must not indulge themselves in this or any other high gratification of sense at those times wherein they should every day set themselves to the solemn performance of those holy exercises. Some due distance of time should be always observed between the one and the other. But extraordinary Prayer (particularly, Prayer with Fasting) requires abstinence for a greater interval. Christians must keep a spiritual decorum, and carefully shun whatsoever practise doth not become holiness.

§ 37. It concerns them whose aim and care is that their lives may be pure and holy, to endeavour to keep themselves from all irregularity and inordinate actings in this thing; and thereupon to watch against all base brutishness, and unseemliness of behaviour, and preposterous ways, and abusive dalliances in it, as knowing that they are always under the eye of the Holy God. It behoves them so to use it, as not to weaken their bodies, or corrupt their minds; as not to irritate, but to allay sensuality; and to have this as all other lawful gratifications of sense, in a manifest and direct subserviency to spiritual ends, and so to manage themselves therein, as that they may be able with a good conscience to pray that it may be sanctified to them. And there is as great need of prayer for the sanctifying of the marriage-bed, as of any other enjoyment belonging to the Animal life; and it may be greater, because Reason is in danger to be put much besides its present use.

Let all that call themselves Christians, retain in their hearts a deep impression of the words of the holy Apostle, 1 Thes. 4 3, 4. *This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, which know not God: for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.* Christians are by the same Apostle called upon to consider, that their bodies are the members of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 6. 15, 19. And in this consideration they should lothe and dread all manner of obscenity, and vile abuse of their own bodies.

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## JONAH II. ver. 1,2,3,4.

**J**ONAH prophesied in *Israel* in or before the days of *Jeroboam* the son of *Joash*, 2 *King*. 14 25. He was also sent to preach to *Niniveh* the chief City of the *Assyrian* Empire. But he disobeyed the call of God, and endeavoured to flee to *Tarshish*. The Lord by a mighty storm at Sea pursues him. And being by lot and his own confession found guilty, and the cause of the tempest, the Mariners by his own direction cast him into the Sea ; where the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow him up, and he was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

This Chapter contains *Jonah's* exercise in the fishes belly ; the Narrative whereof was penned after his deliverance, with an addition of praise.

Ver. 1. *Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fishes belly.*

Before this trouble he was froward against God, and fled from him ; now he is humble and yielding.

Our distress and trouble is sanctified to us, when our frowardness and averfeness from duty is overcome, and we are made humble and yielding to God, and ready for duty ; when we are brought to our good behaviour.

Let us look after this fruit of our distresses, troubles, or crosses, that we be brought in and subdued to God. Let us also look after this kindly fruit of publick troubles.

He flees to God by prayer. Our distress and trouble is sanctified to us, when it drives us to prayer, that we set about it in earnest, and continue in it, and so bring us close to God. *I/a.* 26 16. *Lord in trouble have they visited thee. They poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.*

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Let us look after this kindly fruit of our publick and private troubles, that we be more in prayer, and much visit the throne of Grace; that instead of running from God, we run to him and cast our selves into the arms of his mercy. Then hath God reduced us, and brought us home to our true rest, that we might be safe; then he hath done us good indeed.

Further, we hence learn, That prayer to God is a refuge to the afflicted, both to the Church, and to every faithful soul; and they find relief in it. All the distressed that take this course, find sure comfort.

Because God is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, *Rom. 10. 12. The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.* Yea, God is more especially helpful to the distressed, *Hos. 14. 3. In thee the fatherless findeth mercy.*

This instructs us what is our refuge in all our troubles, and what course to take wherein we shall not fail to speed, *Jam. 5. 13. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.* Be sincere in this duty, and perform it with unfeigned repentance for your former neglect.

Moreover it is here said, That *Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God.* The Lord was still his God, notwithstanding his severe hand upon him.

When God corrects us for sin, he doth not cast us off as none of his. Correction is not Rejection. Still his gracious relation to us, and our Covenant-interest in him abides.

Wherefore let them that fear the Lord still look to him, and claim an interest in him as their God, tho he be angry, and severely chasten them. Thus the Church lays claim to him, *Isa. 63. 16. Doubtless thou art our Father, &c. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, &c.*

And let us take hold of his Covenant whereby he is our God, for encouragement in prayer, and the ground of our humble confidence toward him. Let as many as are humble, and willing to accept his grace, do this.

Here is noted, the condition whereid he was, *out of the fishes belly*; a distress into which he had brought himself by his rebellion, or wilful disobedience.

Hence we learn, That after wilful disobedience we may sue to God for mercy. He hath not shut up the way against us; because there is Forgiveness with him, and he hath left room for repentance.



Let this goodness of God lead sinners to repentance. Let such goodness overcome their hearts; for it is set forth for this very end. God hath not shut up the way. Let not them shut out themselves. Let a penitent people encourage themselves, as *Israel* is encouraged, *Hos. 14. 1. O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.* Let the children of God after high provocations, being duly humbled, encourage themselves in his mercy.

Tho we have wilfully brought our selves into trouble by our own Folly, yea run into it; yet we must not discourage our selves, as if it were in vain to pray to God for help. This is indeed a very uncomfortable circumstance in our suffering, to draw it upon our selves; yet this was *Jonah's* case. Therefore in such a case let us judg and lothe our selves; let us fear and tremble in our selves; yet let us not despair, nor be driven from seeking our relief. For God delights to save them that have undone themselves.

V. 2. *I cryed by reason of my affliction, unto the Lord, and he heard me: out of the belly of hell cryed I, and thou heardst my voice.*

This verse expresseth the sum of his trouble, his exercise in it, and his gracious audience. His trouble, and his prayer in it, *I cryed by reason of my affliction: out of the belly of hell cried I.* Here was a deplorable state, and in appearance desperate; yet his Faith could look through to Gods Mercy-seat.

There is no state so deplorable, and seemingly desperate, that the people of God may be brought into, but their Faith may see a way through it to the throne of Grace, whether it be the state of any particular Child of God, or of his Church and people in common.

Is any Child of God so distressed, that he can see no outlet? yet let him look through it to the Throne of Grace. There is hope for him in his God; and let him look to God, and be comforted; *Isa. 50. 10.*

Doth the condition of the Church appear forlorn and hopeless, as *Jonah's* was, that we can see no way to escape? yet God can open a way by a strange hand of Providence. *He is fearful in praises, doing wonders, Exod. 15. 11.* Truly our condition is very deplorable, if we look to human help. Yet the Providence of God,

And his appearances for us are some glimps of light, some token for good. Therefore be not faithless, but believing; do not abandon your hope; tho' greatly distressed, encourage your selves in the Lord your God.

*I cryed by reason of my affliction, &c.*

Great distress calls for great importunity in prayer; not only to call upon God, but to cry to him; to cry mightily, as the King of *Niniveh* commanded his subjects. *Jonah* 3. 8. *Let them cry mightily unto God.* When we thus cry, our own necessity is feelingly acknowledged, and Gods mercy is duly valued.

Let the distress of our Nation, and the Church and people of God therein, excite us to send up strong cries to him that is able to save. So did Christ himself, *Heb.* 5. 7. Let his example stir us up. Let us wrestle with God as *Jacob* did, *Gen.* 32. 26 *He said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me;* and he had success. Importunity and uncessancy in prayer, is a token for good. When God pours out a spirit of prayer, and so prepares our hearts, he will cause his ear to hear.

Now follows the gracious audience, *I cryed, and he heard me.*

God will hear the cry of the distressed; he will regard their importunity, and help them in their extremity.

For he is merciful, and full of compassion; he waits that he may be gracious. When he delays his help, he doth but wait for our preparedness. But when he sees our unfeigned humiliation, and our earnest faith in his mercy, and our fervent and uncessant desire of his relief, then his bowels yearn over us: *A.* he saith concerning *Ephraim* in such a frame of spirit, *My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him,* *Jer.* 31. 20.

This is for the comfort of a praying people, whose great distress raiseth their importunity in prayer. Let it comfort us to think upon it, that our voice is heard out of the belly of Hell. In the extremity of evill we are not shut out from a gracious audience. Our prayer reacheth Gods ear.

*V. 3. For thou hast cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.*

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Here he enlargeth the narration of his trouble. He shews he had to do with an angry God, who pursued him in his just and high displeasure.

God may pursue his people in his just anger for their high provocations, and cast them into overwhelming trouble; he may plunge them into the depth of misery. He may make them know, that he pursues his controversie with them; and that because they have walked contrary to him, he also will walk contrary to them; and he will greatly distress them.

For God will maintain his honour, and make it known, that it cannot be well with any in going cross to him; no, not with his dear children *Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?* Job 9. 4.

Let the people and servants of God take heed of provoking him to anger, and raising his just displeasure, and so engaging him against them. We provoke God by any wilful contrariety to him; especially by persisting in it, as was the case of *Jonah*. Here let us consult our own peace, and the peace of our Nation. Let us therefore fear before him, stand in awe and sin not, *Psal. 4. 4.* Beware of him, provoke him not. Thus the Lord warns the *Israelites* concerning the Angel, their Conductor, supposed to be the Son of God, the Mediator. *Exod. 20. 21. Behold I send my angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice: provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my Name is in him.* He will not pardon your transgressions; that is, he will not let any wilful indignity and contempt offered to him, pass unpunished, or without taking notice of it, for your humiliation and abasement. Carefully prevent provoking sins; and if there be any provocation, speedily cease from it.

V. 4 *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight: yet will I look again towards thy holy Temple.*

He further expresseth his exercise in his trial, wherein is his conflict betwixt Faith and Unbelief, Hope and Despair, and the prevalence of his Faith and Hope.

His Conflict in these words, *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.* Hence we learn, That the children of God are put to conflict, not only with outward afflictions, but with inward temptations.

ons, even temptations to unbelief and despair. They are apt to draw sad conclusions from their outward troubles, even to conclude their being rejected of God.

One great reason hereof, is the terror of their own guilt. Conscience flies in their face. And if Conscience condemn them, they think the holy God is much more against them. 1 Joh. 3. 20. *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* And so they are amazed.

Another reason is, their proneness to judge of Gods respect to them, and their interest in him, by sense and outward appearance.

Under afflictions we are to prepare for assaults of sad temptations, which are indeed a greater burden and danger to us than the outward affliction.

Our wisdom is to prevent such temptations under affliction, as may arise from the terror of our own guilt, and horror of conscience : to prevent them, I say, by keeping peace with God, and carefully avoiding breaches with him.

If upon breaches with him, such terror do arise ; our business is upon our unfeigned humiliation and repentance, to look by faith to the boundless mercy of God in Christ, and to stay our selves thereon, that we may not sink in despair.

Likewise under inward temptations we are to raise our Faith above sense, that we may judge of Gods respect to us, ~~not~~ according to appearance, but according to truth. That how sad soever the case be, we may be able to say there is hope concerning this thing.

Now follows the prevalence of his Faith and Hope in these words, *Yet will I look again t wards thy holy Temple.*

Gods children may for a season be born down by temptations, yet they recover themselves after a while.

They recollect themselves, and judge of things more calmly and considerately ; and thereupon see ground of hope. As the Church, Lament. 3. 1. *This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.*

Herewithall they set themselves to resist the temptation, and strive against unbelief, as dishonourable to God, and hurtful to their own souls, and unreasonable in it self. And they resolve to trust in the Name of the Lord, and to stay themselves on their God, *Isa. 50. 10.* They rebuke themselves for their unbelief, and charge themselves to hope in God ; *Psal. 42. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? hope thou in God.* And

And God is with them, and doth uphold them by the help of his grace. He doth alſo ſo regulate and moderate the temptation, that they may be able to bear it. And he doth open a way for them to eſcape, according to the promiſe.

Let us not lye under temptations to deſpair, or deſpondence, or conſuſion of mind, which diſables us to any good; and tends to drive us from God, and utterly ruine us. Let us not give way to them; for they ariſe from the darkneſs of our mind, and the evil root of unbelief, and from the malice of the Devil. They are enforced upon us by our adverſary for our deſtruction. Therefore it behoves us not to give place to him.

Let us not quit all, nor thus abandon our ſelves, but look again towards God as a harbour to the diſtreſſed. Let us help our ſelves, and make uſe of our Reaſon, which is an auxiliary to Faith. But above all, let us implore the help of God, his ſufficient grace; and let us conceive of him as the infinite goodneſs willing to help.

In ſo doing we honour God, and are pleaſing to him, and ſet our ſelves in a ſure way of deliverance.

*I will look again towards thy holy temple.*

The Temple was a ſymbol of the gracious preſence of God among his people, according to his Covenant. The Divine preſence was on the Mercy-ſeat in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, which did repreſent God as propitious through Chriſt.

The Faithful recover out of temptations by looking to God ſitting on his Mercy-ſeat in his holy Temple in the higheſt Heavens; that is, as propitious in Chriſt, according to his Covenant of Grace to all penitent believers.

This Mercy-ſeat erected in Chriſt, is the hope that is ſet before us in all our diſtreſs and trouble. And to thoſe that are fled for refuge to it, there is ſtrong conſolation, *Heb. 6. 18.* God is propitious in Chriſt the great Propitiation. There is a ſure Covenant, and an everlaſting Covenant of peace, whoſoever takes hold of it, ſhall be ſaved.

This Covenant in Chriſt holds forth forgiveness of ſins, and plenteous redemption to all that take hold of it. This is the Rock of Ages; and whoſoever do reſt their Faith on it, their Souls ſhall be at reſt.

When we are cast into the depth of the Sea, when we lye as it were in the belly of Hell, let us look unto God in his holy Temple ; and that both in case of our particular distress, and in case of the common distress of Gods Church. Psal. 11. 3, 4. *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do ? The Lord is in his holy temple ; the Lords throne is in Heaven.* How distressed soever our state is, even to the destroying of the foundations, and how provoking soever our sins have been, yet God is in his Holy Temple, he is propitious in Christ. God is in Christ reconciling sinners to himself, not imputing sin to penitent sinners.

In all our distresses let us plead before him these things, 1. The mercifulness of his nature. 2. Christ the great Propitiatory Sacrifice for sin. 3. The steadfastness of his Covenant made in Christ. 4. The erecting of his Mercy-seat, and the placing of himself upon a Throne of Grace. And so let us hear what he will answer us, and see what he will do for us.

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## JOHN XVI. 33.

*In the world ye shall have tribulation.*

**T**HEY who have peace in Christ, are liable to, and must look for tribulation or pressing affliction in the world. They must look for all manner of temptations and trials of affliction, in mind, in body, in estate, in relations, in reputation, in their worldly affairs, in all things belonging to them. *1 Pet. 1. 6. James 1. 2.*

1. The state of the world is difficult and troublesome. *Eccles. 1. 8. All things are full of labour;* and the faithful in this World have their share in the common condition of mankind. *Eccles.*

2. *All things come alike to all.*

2. God doth exercise a corrective discipline over the godly in this world, as he did over *Israel* in the wilderness. *Deut 8. 5. Thou shalt consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.* The godly are here in an imperfect state, and are therein probationers for a perfect state in another world; and God deals with them accordingly, to train them up for that future state by present trouble.

3. The faithful are liable to persecution from the hatred of the world, which is adverse to Christ, and to them upon his account. *John 15. 19.* In the primitive and ancient times of the Church, Christians suffered from the Pagan world. In after-times the followers of the Lamb suffered from the Antichristian Power. And at all times sincere Christians suffer from those that have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

4. The Devil's hatred is great against those whom Christ hath rescued out of his power, and he will do them all the spight he can, as far as God will suffer him; as we see in *Job's* case. He stirs up the malignant world against the true Church; he raiseth prejudice against them, and makes them odious by slanders, and fills his instruments with rage; yea, by his stratagems he doth too often set the Church against it self; and makes one party of sincere Christians to persecute another.

This is a brief account of the troubles of the faithful in the world. All this is done under the holy and wise government of God. He is the Supreme disposer of all the mischief that is done, and all the miseries that are undergone in the world. The malice of men and devils, and the manifold temptations of the godly, he doth over-rule and dispose to his holy ends.

Gods Attributes are much glorified in this state of things. His Holiness and Justice are exercised, and made manifest in the sufferings of the godly, in that tho he hath accepted them in Christ, yet he will declare his displeasure against their sin, by making them feel some smart sufferings. His power and mercy is likewise exercised in supporting them under sufferings, and in delivering them out of sufferings. His Wisdom and Faithfulness is exercised in proportioning their sufferings to their strength, so that they may be able to bear, and by bearing overcome. So that his people may be sure of that which was *Pauls* comfort, *2 Tim. 4. 18. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work; and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.*

As Gods Attributes are glorified, so the good of the faithful is much promoted in this state of things. For their sufferings are corrections to humble them, trials to prove them, exercises to prepare them for the glory that shall follow, and preservatives to keep them to it.

The use to be made hereof, is for the patience and comfort of believers during their abode in this world. This is needful, as it is said, *Ye have need of patience*, *Heb. 10. 36.* And for this end God hath provided a rich treasure of comfort for them in his word, as it is written *Rom. 15. 4. That ye through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

Here I have several heads of Consolation to propound, and to shew how they may be improved.

The first is, That tribulation in the world is well consistent with peace in Christ, according to his words, *That in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation.* Yea, it furthers this peace; for it drives us under the wing of Christ, and makes us to abide under it.

Yea, the Worlds enmity will follow Christs peace; persecution is affixed to Christs followers, *2 Tim. 3. 12.*

The certainty and inevitability of persecution, doth more especially respect times and places, wherein the Devil reigns by false Religion

Religion, as in the Pagan and Antichristian idolatry : to which may be added the *Mahometan* infidelity. Yet where true Religion is established in the external-form, sincere worshippers are liable to be persecuted by formal worshippers, as in those times of the *Jewish Church*, wherein the true prophets were slain for their testimony by a wicked prevailing power, *Matt.* 23. 37. *Gal.* 4. 29.

Let this be improved, that upon this account trouble in the world may be the less grievous. Set a due value upon peace in Christ, and you will set less by trouble in the world. Indeed if you live in the enjoyment of that peace, you will quietly bear the worlds trouble. The soul that is lodged in Christs peace, is in a strong hold, or incompass'd with a strong guard, and kept safe and sure against all assaults, *Phil.* 4. 7.

Secure your selves in this peace, by considering what it is. It is a peace that passeth all understanding ; that is, the worth of it is incomprehensible ; for the benefits whence it flows, pass all understanding. There is included in it pardon of sin, deliverance from the wrath to come, the favour and friendship of God, and fellowship with him, and an unchangeable good estate, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, and everlasting consolation. This is enough to quiet the mind, and stablish the heart, as it is written *2 Thess.* 2. 16. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work* You see what is included in Christs peace ; O prize it according to the worth of it, and secure your selves in it as in a strong hold, by delightful meditation.

Solace your selves in this peace, as in a kind of Paradise ; For it is that Paradise which God lets his people into upon earth ; and it is some toretaste and pledg of the Celestial Paradise.

The Worlds trouble cannot drive you out of this strong hold, out of this Garden of God ; but it is well consistent with it. *Paul* sets forth this inward peace in outward trouble, *2 Cor.* 4. 8. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed.*

The second head of consolation is, that there remaineth a rest to the people of God, *Heb.* 4. 9. a perfect and everlasting rest.

This God will bring his suffering-people to in his righteousness and great faithfulness. *2 Thes. 1. 6, 7. It is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you : and to you that are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.*

This Rest is in your Fathers House, in the Heavenly Mansions, in the Regions of perfect light and joy, the habitation of Angels and blessed Spirits, and the residence of the Divine Glory ; where sin and temptation cannot enter, where all danger and fears, all suffering and sorrow are shut out for ever. Where there is no variableness nor shadow of turning in the Saints felicity, because they are before the throne of God, and see his face. And they shall perfectly know, love, and enjoy God their Father, and Jesus their glorified Saviour ; and they shall dwell for ever at the Fountain of Life, and Light, and Joy. Hallelujahs and triumphant praises shall be their constant employment, with such other Services or Ministries as are proper to the Heavenly state.

Let this be improved. By the eye of Faith look to this everlasting Peace and Joy, and set your hearts upon it, and then you will be above the tribulation of this world.

Do this in imitation of your blessed Redeemer, of whom it is said, *Heb. 12. 2. that for the joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* For the joy that was set before him. Look unto this future joy by a lively act of faith, as it is the evidence of things not seen ; and as *Moses* chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, because he had respect to the recompence of reward ; so let us do ; and consider with *Paul* how this light affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, *2 Cor. 4. 17.*

Wherefore stir up your faith in the promises of Christ, that it may act in a lively manner. A lively faith hath a reaching sight, it can see into the third Heaven. And the more you fix upon this object, the clearer sight you will have of it. A fixed meditation on the heavenly glory, strengthens the eye of faith. While we look at the things which are not seen, *2 Cor. 4. 18.* The word imports, As Shooters look at the mark with a fixed earnestness.

As we should look to this blessed and everlasting rest, by the eye of faith ; so we should labour to ensure our right and title to it ;

to have such good evidence for it, as will not fail ; and to have it as clear as it can be had.

This assurance will set our hearts at rest in all the shakings of this world ; and we shall thereby be quiet from the fear of evil, and shall have patience in the greatest trials. This will set us above the tormenting fear of death, and free us from that bondage. Being assured of that blessed state to come, we may welcome death in its approaches. And in case we be above the slavish fear of death, what can we not bear ? For we know the time is but short, and we are waiting for the end. Then bodily sickness and pains will signify to us our approaching blessedness ; then bloody persecutions and fiery trials do but call us up from earth to heaven ; then poverty and nakedness, bonds and imprisonments, banishments, and all kinds of distresses and dangers, tell us we are thereby hastening to our final state, and the nearer it comes, the more we may rejoice, as knowing that we are the nearer to our salvation.

The third Head of Consolation follows, *viz.* That the tribulation to which believers are liable, is but in the world ; it is confined to this world, and terminated in this life.

Should we think it hard to suffer in such a world as this ? In a world, all the glory whereof is but as grass, and the flower of the field, and as a scene or shew that passeth away, and all the state of it is at the best but vanity and vexation of spirit. In a world, which lies in wickedness, which for the greater part of it is led by the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devillish ; which in respect of the malignity prevailing in it, is as the suburbs of Hell ; and in which so many men are as Devils one to another. In a world, which God hath appointed for a purgatory to the best of men that are in it ; and to whom at the best it is but a state of trial to humble them, and to prove them, that they may be fitted for a better world. In a world, wherein the children of God are malign'd and scorn'd : wherein they, of whom the world was not worthy, were destitute, afflicted, and tormented ; and wherein the Prince of Life, and Lord of Glory himself was crucified. In a world, wherein hypocrites and false Christians reproach the Name of Christ by their unchristian conversation ; and open the mouths of his professed enemies to blaspheme him ; and wherein sincere Christians through weakness of grace, and strength of corruption, and by yielding to temptation, too often grieve the Holy Spirit, and dishonour the Name of God, and lay a stumbling-block before

before others. Should we think it hard usage to have a share of sufferings appointed us in such a world as this?

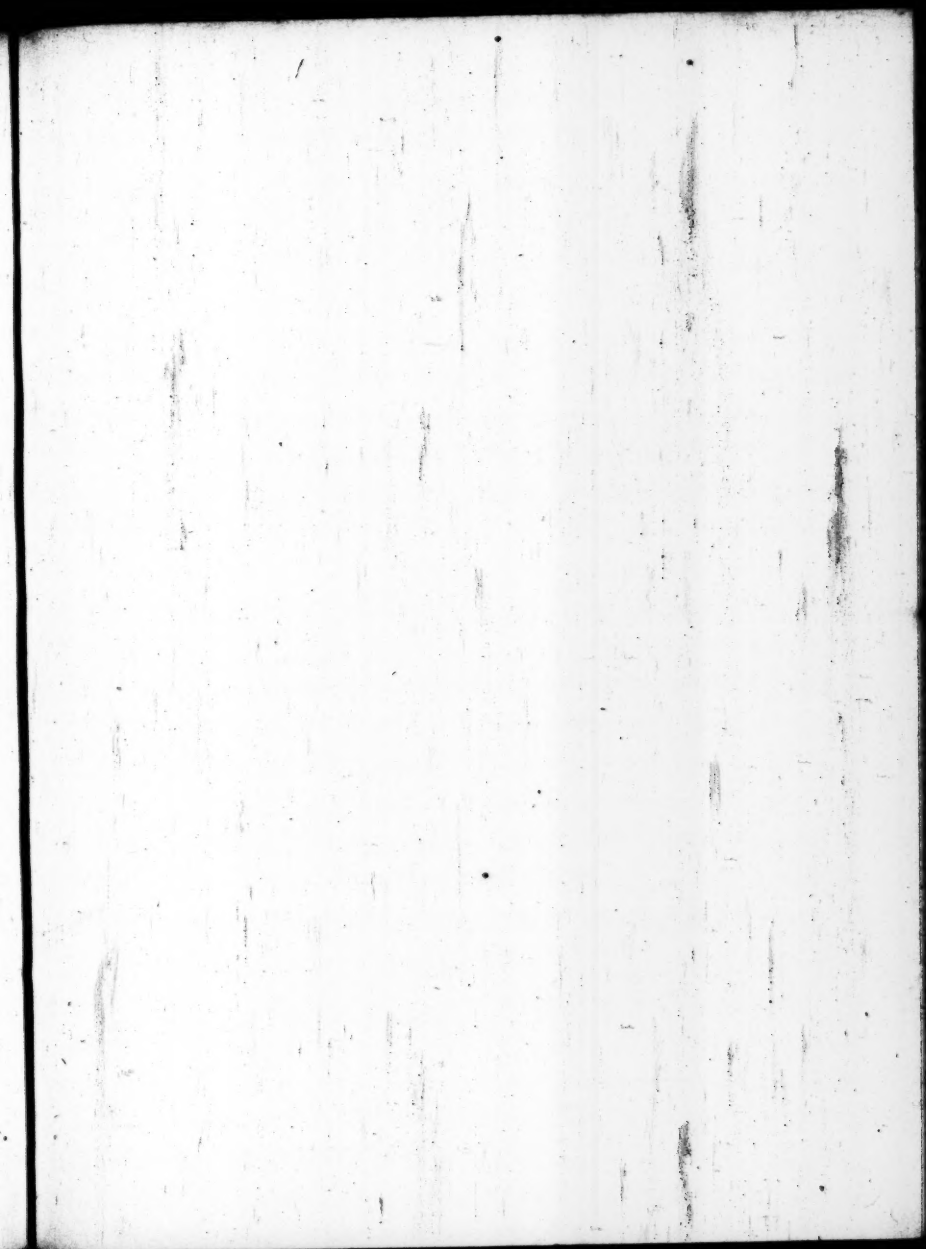
Let this be improved. Consider we what is the true state of this vain and evil world, that we may comfort our selves in that we do not receive our good things in it, but undergo hardships, and so have the lot of *Lazarus*, and not of *Dives*, to whom it was said, *Luke 16 25. Remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things: now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Let it comfort us, I say, that God hath not given us our portion of good in such a wretched world, but hath reserved it for us in a better; and that here amidst our sorrows, he hath given us the first fruits of happiness.

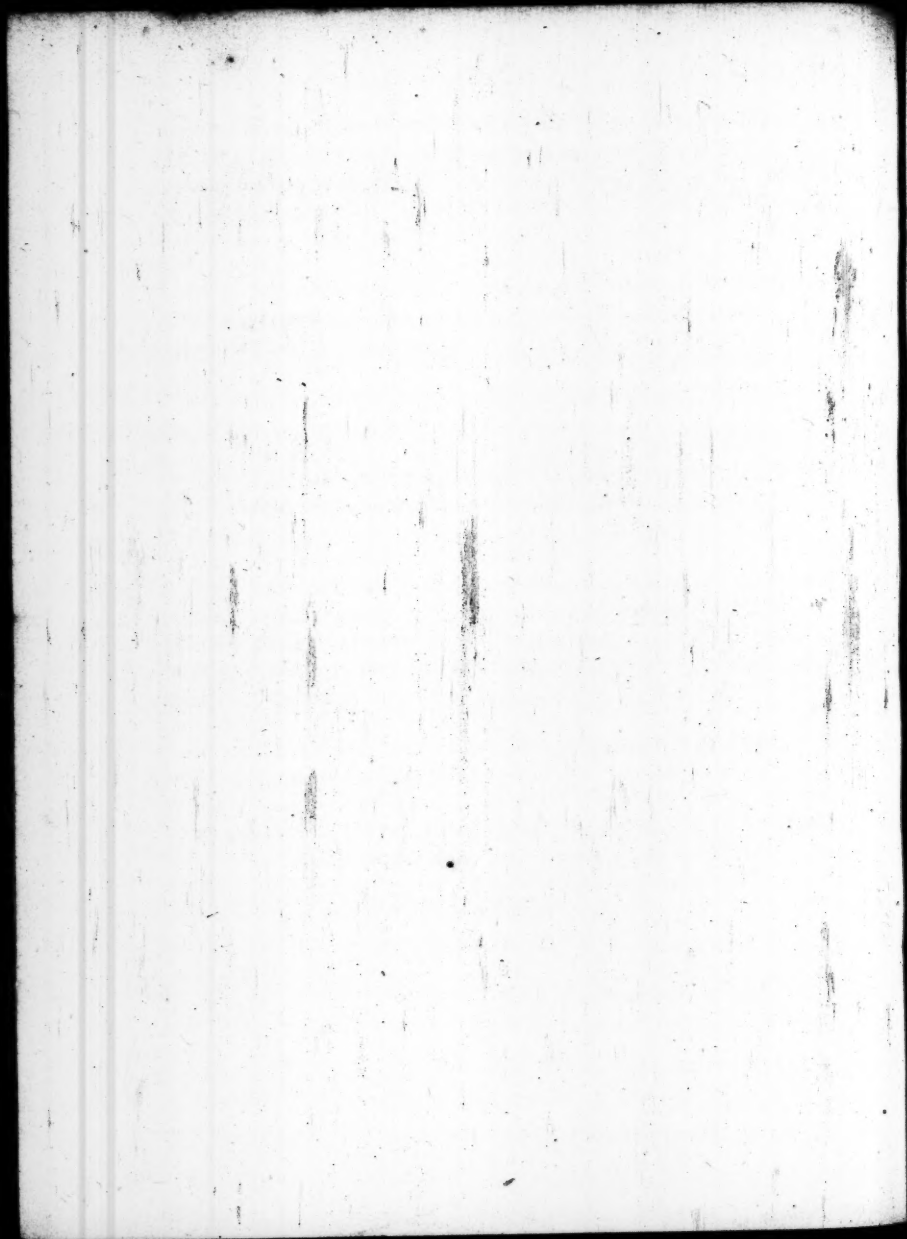
Let it be considered, That if tribulation were not most expedient in this present world, he that is infinitely powerful, wise and good, would not appoint it for his dear children. If the present state of things, and the condition of this world, did not require it as best, all things considered, it would not be.

Therefore concerning this appointment, look not to your own thoughts, but consider as the heaven is high above the Earth, so is Gods thoughts herein above your thoughts, and his ways above your ways. *Isa. 55. 9.* His understanding is infinite, and his mercy hath no end; and his faithfulness reacheth beyond our comprehension.

Be comforted that in this dark World you are in his hand, who wishes better to you than you to your selves, and who knows better how to dispose of you, than your selves do. Tho we are now in darkness, He will bring us forth to the light; and we shall behold his righteousness. *Mic. 7. 9.* We are under afflictive providences, but in a dark and dismal World; light of perfect joy is reserved for us in the regions of light.







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An Account given of the

# Principles & Practises

Of Several

## NONCONFORMISTS.

Wherein it Appears that their Religion is no other than what is Profess'd in the Church of *England*.

In Vindication of themselves and others of their perswasion, against the misrepresentation made of them. And in hearty desire of Unity in the Church, and of peace and concord amongall true Protestants, for the strengthening of their Common Interest, in this time of their common Danger.

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Written by Mr. *John Corbet*, late of *Chichester*, and approved by many other Nonconformists.

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L O N D O N.

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*, at the Bible and 3 Crowns near *Mercers Chappel*, at the lower end of *Cheapside*. 1682.

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## To the Reader.

**R**eaders, Least you should think that the agreement of all here written (in sense and very much in words) with what I have Published, doth signifie that it is not wholly the Authors work, but any of it mine, I do truly acquaint you that he never so much as acquainted me with his writing it; nor did I read it all before I gave it to the Printer; nor did I alter, adde or diminish one word in all the book. But as we were of one Mind and Heart, our agreement is no wonder: And his widow (the daughter of the famous Dr. Twisse) assureth me that several eminent Nonconforming Divines saw it and approved it; as I doubt not but most others will do when they have seriously perused it.

But, alas, I that have known these twenty years, what other designes have been in some mens heads, inconsistent with all such indeavours for our Concord, and how powerful those men have been who profess, [that there is no way of Concord, and avoiding Schisme, but by obeying the Governing Universal Church, which hath the power of Universal Legislation and Judgment, which is a Forreign Jurisdiction;] I say, I that know this must needs know, how little more than the satisfying of our Consciences, such pacificatory endeavours as these do signifie. But as my dear Brother dyed in the comfort of Christs judgment [Blessed are the Peacemakers] the rest of us wait in hope so to dye.

Richard Baxter  
Feb. 10. 1681.

*Several Tracts not yet Printed, prepared for the Press,  
and left under Mr. John Corbett's own hand-  
ling, intended shortly to be Published, are as  
follows ;*

1. **T**HE true State of the Ancient Episcopacy..
2. The present Ecclesiastical Government,  
compared with the Ancient Episcopacy.
3. A Consideration of the present State of Con-  
formity in the Church of *England*.
4. A Discourse of the Church and of the Ministry  
thereof.
5. A Tract of Certainty and Infallibility.
6. Of Divine Worship, in three parts; 1. Of  
the Nature, Kinds, Parts and Adjuncts of Divine  
Worship. 2. Of Idolatry. 3. Of Superstition  
less than Idolatry..
7. His Humble Representation of his Case, touch-  
ing the Exercise of his Ministry.
8. Discourses, between Dr. *Gunning*, late Bishop  
of *Clickester*, and himself ; wherein are several  
Humble Defences made both as to his Principles  
and Practice.
9. An humble endeavour of some plain and brief  
Explication of the Decrees and Operations of God  
about the free Actions of Men. More especially of  
the Operations of Divine Grace.
10. Matrimonial Purity.



*An Account given by some deprived Ministers, of  
their judgement and practice, &c.*

**T**HE manifold reproaches heaped upon the Non-conformists, among whom it is our lot to be numbred, have filled the whole Nation. Our Religion hath been represented as a mixture of folly and villany; our principles and tempers as turbulent, seditious, and utterly inconsistent with the peace of Church or State; and our pretences as frivolous and often baffled. Our Governours have been admonished to beware of us as their worst and most dangerous enemies, and excited to use the utmost severities against us.

Hereupon it behoves us to humble our selves in the sight of the Lord, and to implore his mercy, and to bear his just rebukes in the unjust reproaches cast upon us by men; also to suffer these indignities with Christian patience, and to shew our selves reconcilable to those, who have been so adverse to us, and to endeavour peace and concord with them, if it be possible, many of whom we suppose to have been acted in this matter with an undissembled zeal, though not regulated by sound knowledge or due charity, but hurried with unreasonable prejudice and passion. We hold it also our duty not to neglect our own necessary vindication, but in honest simplicity to make known to all, what principals and practices we own and stand to. Though we are taught and encouraged to labour and suffer reproach, and to reckon it a very small thing, to be judged by man's judgment, yet we are bound to

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vindicate our innocence for the truths sake, and out of charity towards all men to provide, what in us lies, that none may take an occasion of stumbling in us. And here it shall suffice us only to make a true representation of our selves, having this confidence, that the bare stating of our case will be our sufficient defence.

1. In the first place we declare, that with us the kingdom of God is not Conformity or Nonconformity as such, but Christianity or real Godliness, which is most summarily comprized in the baptismal Covenant of Grace, and more explicitly yet briefly in the Creed, Lords Prayer and Decalogue, and at large and most perfectly in the Holy Bible. A religiousness made up of little opinions, and modes, and phrases, and findings with this or the other party, is none of ours, though we are injuriously personated in some late writings, to act such a part. Faith, hope and love is the essence of our Religion, and with us differences in things not essential, do not make different Religions. VVe disdain our being of a party as such; And though the godly be a peculiar people, we confine not godliness to any peculiar way narrower than mere Christianity. We make no Humane additions in Sacred things, nor any mutable circumstances to be the terms of Christian Fellowship.

2. Accordingly we seek not the advancement of any Sect or Party, to the injury or neglect of the Universal Church, or Christian cause, or the common good. And as we are no faction, we know that Factionness is not our Interest, but turns to our greatest loss. Our aims being Christian and Catholick, we seek the increase of the visible Catholick Church, or the whole Society of men professing true Christianity, in order to the increase of the Church invisible, or the Society of Regenerate Christians. And to these ends we desire and most approve the primitive simplicity in Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline. And herein we boast not, as if we were the  
only

only men of the Primitive Christian Spirit, but we answer them, who have trampled upon us as an impertinent trifling Sect.

3. We heartily own the Protestant Reformation in Doctrine, and particularly that of the Church of *England*, contained in the Nine and Thirty Articles, except those Two or Three that relate only to some of our present differences, and not at all to the Doctrine of Faith and Sacraments. And we greatly esteem the soundness of the Doctrine contained in the Homilies. We unfeignedly assent to the sense of his Majesties Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs in that Passage, wherein he justly rebukes those that had the hardyness to publish, that the Doctrine of the Church (against which no man with whom he had conferred, had excepted) ought to be Reformed as well as the Discipline.

Be it here observed, that some Conformists tell us, that *they heartily subscribe to the Nine and Thirty Articles, taking the liberty of interpretation, that is allowed by the Church her self, though it be most reasonable to presume that she requires subscription to them, as to an Instrument of Peace only*; And for this, the Testimony of an eminent Bishop is cited, saying, *The Church of England doth not define any of these Questions as necessary to be believed necessitate medii, or præcepti which is much less, but only to bind her Sons, for Peace sake, not to oppose them.* But for our parts we believe the very truth of the Doctrine contained in them, according to the genuine sense of the words.

4. We are not ashamed constantly to affirm, that the word of God is the perfect Rule of Divine Faith and VVorship; and we apprehend that it is not Lawfull for the Church, or any power upon Earth, to make new worship of the same common nature and reason, with those universal and perpetual Ordinances, which the word hath already made. Nevertheless particular modes and accidents, and mere circum-

stances of worship, which are common to it, with all Humane actions, are left to the determination of Humane Prudence; according to the general Rules of Scripture. And we take such determination in those matters to be no addition to God's word, and no argument of the defeasiveness of his Laws, but merely an application of the general Law in particular cases, as the Law it self doth warrant. A firm agreement of the Non-Conformists with the Church of *England*, in the substantial parts of God's worship, hath been long since manifested in their Papers presented to his Majesty. We still acknowledge the lawfulness of a set form of Liturgy for matter agreeable to God's word, and suited to the nature of the several Ordinances, and to the necessities of the Church: yet the Minister should not be so confined to it, as not to make use of his own gifts of Prayer and Exhortation. VVe still profess that we are obliged to do all things decently, and in order: but we are not satisfied in the lawfulness of such Ceremonies, as in their designed end seem to draw to near to the significancy and moral efficacy of Sacraments, and which have been rejected by many of the Reformed Churches abroad. And we believe that God's worship is best managed for the Exterior form thereof, when it hath least of Humane mixtures in things unnecessary adjoynd and appropriated thereunto.

5. We intirely own that Ministry, that God hath set in the Church, whether extraordinary and temporary as that of the Apostles, or ordinary and perpetual, as that of Bishops or Pastors, and Teachers. VVe believe that it is Christs high prerogative, transcending all Humane authority to institute Spiritual Offices; (how be it there may be Offices *circa sacra* of man's appointment) That Spiritual Officers receive their authority from Christ as the immediate *Donor* thereof by his Charter (though their designation to their Office is not ordinarily immediate without man's interposing) and consequently they are Christ's immediate Stewards, commissioned by him

him and accountable to him, each one for himself in particular ; That the power of the Keys for binding and loosing, for retaining and remitting of sins is essential to a Presbyter or Bishop ; That Ministerial power is delivered by Ordination, as by way of solemn investiture ; and that each particular Church ought to have their proper Bishop or Pastor, (one or more) residing among them for all Ministerial duties, who hath no coercive power upon the bodies or estates of men, and may rule them by no other instrument, than the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, working upon their Consciences, and their outward standing in the Church.

6. The Church being the Lord's heritage and portion ought not to lye common, but must be fenced with Christ's Spiritual Discipline, that it be not laid wast and lost in a VWorld of Ungodliness breaking in upon it. This charge is committed to the Pastors, who are accountable for the same to the chief Shepherd. By the order of the Church of *England* all Presbyters were charged, till very lately, in the form of ordaining Ministers, *to administer the Doctrine, Sacraments and Discipline, as the Lord hath ordained, and as this Realm hath received the same.* And that they might the better understand what the Lord hath commanded, the Exhortation of St. *Paul* to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus* was appointed to be read to them at the time of their Ordination. *Take heed to your selves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you over-seers to rule the Congregation of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Admission into the Church by Baptism is one act of Pastoral Government, and includes the judging of the title of the party to be so admitted. That which we require in the adult for their visible Church-Membership, is their intelligent owning of the Baptismal Covenant by a serious profession, there being no notoriety or proof of an invalidating contradiction. Other parts of Discipline are the publick admonition of scandalous offenders, and injoyning of penitence, the Excommunication of the obstinate,

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and the absolution of the penitent. This Spiritual Government is not to be managed with external force and terror, like the secular power, but by Reproof, Exhortation and Doctrine, that the offender may be convinced and judged in his own Conscience. And we take it for a great reproach to Christ's Discipline to tell the World, that it is a powerless thing of it self, and insufficient to obtain its end, unless the temporal Sword inforce it. Yet we would not have the Church destitute of the Magistrate's due assistance and encouragement.

7. As touching the form of Church Government, the Scripture-bishop or Evangelical Pastor we do and ever did acknowledge. Likewise we neither do nor ever did renounce the Episcopacy or Presidency, which was of an ancient Ecclesiastical Custom, as in the time of *Ignatius*, yea or of *Cyprian*. Bishop *Ushers* model of Government by Bishops and Arch-bishops with their Presbyters, was by some of us presented to his Majesty, as a ground-work of accommodation. King *Charles* the First in his discourse touching the differences between himself and the two Houses in point of Church Government, declares his judgment in these words, *That he is not against the managing of the Episcopal Presidency in one man, by the joynt counsell and consent of many Presbyters, but that he had offered to restore it as a fit means to avoid those errors, and corruptions, and partialities, which are incident to any one man, also to avoid tyranny which becomes no Christian, least of all Church men; besides it will be a means to take away that odium and burden of affairs, that may lye too heavy on one mans shoulders, as he thought it did formerly on the Bishops here.*

¶ We judge the Episcopal or Pastoral Office to be a personal trust, not to be discharged by delegation to others, and especially that it cannot be deputed to them that are not Bishops or Pastors, and that secular persons cannot administer that power, which intrinsically belongs to Spiritual Officers. And we cannot justify any Ecclesiastical Government in a stated



ted bereaving of the Pastors of particular Churches of that power, that is essential to their office, and in a stated hindering of the effectual exercise of Church Discipline.

8. We detest all manner of Sacrilege, and we think we are as willing as any others, that it should be noted and reprov'd, and that one kind thereof, the unjust alienation of Lands and Goods, devoted to the Church's use for the support of Gods service, we utterly condemn. But there are those that think they can never enough inveigh against this kind, yet fear not to commit the same sin in other instances, which are not less abominable, as the Sacrilege of Pluralists, Non-residents, and all negligent and insufficient Ministers, who devour that which is Holy, taking the Ministerial bendise, and not performing the service. And to alienate persons and gifts, that have been solemnly consecrated to God, we take to be real Sacrilege.

9. We are as willing as any others to take notice of the heinous sin of Schism. But we earnestly desire many that cry out against Schismatics, more impartially to consider the nature of this sin, and to hate it in its full extent. We know the necessity and excellency of Christian Unity and Concord, and the deformity and misery of division, and earnestly pray that Christian Charity might be so conspicuous, that all may know that we are Christ's Disciples by our loving one another. We are for building the Church's Unity upon its only adequate Foundation, which is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever; and in vain do any hope to build it upon a narrower Foundation. We are against the devising of new Articles of Faith, and new parts of Religion, and the enforcing of Oaths and Subscriptions to the same. We require subscription or engagement to no more than the Holy Bible, and if any swerve from the truth in wicked error or practice, let them be tryed and judged by that unalterable Law, which themselves have assented to. And we think

think this the surest way to preserve the Christian Church in soundness of Doctrine, integrity of Life, and Holy Peace. But if the setting forth of a publick confession of Faith or Articles of Religion be insisted on, we allow it as a rule to Preachers, who may be punishable, if they preach contrary Doctrine, though they be not enforced to subscribe to every Title. Moreover we hold not our selves obliged to forsake a true Church as no Church, for the corruptions and disorders found therein, or to separate from its worship for the tolerable faults thereof, while our personal profession of some error, or practice of some evil is not required as the terms of our Communion. How be it we are not so indifferent in this matter as to make no difference between Churches and Pastors. The more pure and powerfull administration of God's Ordinances is to be preferred before that which is more faulty and less effectual. And here again we acknowledge, that in this preference due caution must be used. VVe must not respect our own particular benefit before publick peace and order, and the general good.

10. VVe believe that the power of civil Magistrates is God's Ordinance, necessary for the Government of the world; that their whole authority is derived from him, and subordinate to him, the only universal and unlimited Sovereign Lord; That God's Glory and the Eternal Salvation of men, are higher and nobler ends of their authority than temporal prosperity and peace, that all their decrees and executions should chiefly refer to these ends. and that in their way they are charged with the Souls of men under their jurisdiction. VVe acknowledge that Supreme Magistrates have a civil supremacy in all ecclesiastical matters, and a political Episcopacy over the Pastors of the Church, in their sacred administrations, and may compell them to the performance of their duty, and punish them for their negligence or mal-administration, that they may call Synods; and make Canons, and warrantably thus reform the Church, when it stands in need

of Reformation. Accordingly we acknowledge the Kings Supremacy in all causes, and over all persons, Civil and Ecclesiastical, in these his Majesties Realms and Dominions. Moreover we believe that the higher powers are not to be mere Executioners of the judgments of Ecclesiasticks, but that they may and must be Judges thereof themselves, in order to their own execution ; That their great and proper work about Religion is to incourage and inforce obedience to the Divine Laws, and in subserviency thereunto, to determine such things *circa sacra* as are requisite in general, but in the particulars are left undetermined of God ; Likewise that by moderate penalties they may restrain persons of impious Principles, as Atheists, Infidels, Hereticks from venting their wicked errors, and from any open impious practice ; and that they may constrain men to use such means as God hath made Universally necessary to bring the ignorant to knowledge ; but not to profess either in word or deed what they believe not, or to take that which God hath made the special priviledge of believers. Lastly, Their imperial Government in Religion should be mixed with a paternal clemency and tenderness, according to the meekness of Christ, whose Servants they are, not only as Christians but as Magistrates.

13. It is our Principle, that Humane Laws bind the Conscience, or (to speak more properly) the subjects in point of Conscience, not by a primary obligation as the laws of God do, but by a secondary and subordinate, as from a power derived from God. As it is an evident and important truth, that Inferiors ought to obey their Superiors for Conscience sake, so it is as evident and important, that when Mens commands contradict the commands of God, it is God and not man that must have the preeminence in our obedience. VVith us it is no controverſie, whether the King or Conscience be the Supreme Governour. It is the Magistrate only that enacts publike laws, and hath the publike decisive judgment

ment, whether according to his Laws we are justifiable or condemnable. As for Conscience it is no Governour at all, but only a discernor of our duty, and an internal witness for us, or against us, according to our practice ; and consequently it is concerned to know the will of God, and whether the commands of men be consentaneous or contrary thereunto, which men call the judgment of discretion. If the Magistrates command be just, the Subjects pretending against its lawfulness cannot justify his disobedience ; and if the command be sinfull, his judging it to be lawfull cannot excuse his doing of it from being sin. It is the Subject's duty in these cases first to lay by his error, and then to act according to truth and right, and for that end to use the best means for his own true information.

Whereas some teach, that when we doubt of the lawfulness of the thing enjoyned, and are certain that obedience to authority is a duty, we must do the thing ; VVe conceive that we cannot be certain of our obligation, to obey in a case wherein we are not sure of the lawfulness of the thing commanded, because we are sure we must not obey the Magistrates command in things unlawfull, and our ignorance or error cannot alter our obligation to Gods Law. Here is therefore an uncertainty on either side, and perhaps the danger may be greater on the side of obeying than refusing. For possibly the injunction of a heinous sin may be the matter of the uncertainty, and in this streight we apprehend it more unsafe and less excusable, to choose the greater before the lesser sin, though indeed it be lawfull to choose neither.

VVe hold not that an indifferent thing becomes unlawfull by being commanded, but on the contrary, that a thing indifferent before the Magistrate's command, doth after the command become a duty, it being such as he hath authority to command. Indeed we cannot receive the Dictates of some men, who have written too daringly about Conscience, in reference to Humane Powers. VVe boast not of such Principles as make men of ductile Consciences, obsequious to all designs

designs and interests, but we embrace such as will keep the Church and VVorld in order.

14. VVhen the higher powers command what God forbids, though we are bound not to perform it, yet we must be subject, and not resist, but patiently submit to suffering. The cause of Religion doth not warrant Subjects to take arms against their Lawfull Prince, nor may they, by armed violence against authority, attempt the publique reformation thereof. We hold that it is unlawfull by the constitution and laws of this Kingdom, for any Subjects to take arms against the King, his Office, Authority or Person, or by force of arms to resist any Magistrate or Officer; legally Commissioned or Authorized by him, yea Subjects are bound not only not to resist but to assist and defend their Sovereign with their Estates and Lives, and the Preachers of the Gospel ought to teach the people obedience and loyalty, and to indeavour to root out all Principles of Sedition, Rebellion and Disobedience. VVe believe that we are under no Bond or Obligation to act any thing contrary to these our avowed Principles. And we further make known our detestation of all the indignity and violence offered to the person of our late Sovereign, and especially that most horrid execrable fact of taking away his life, as also the usurpations and violent change of the Government that did accompany the same, against which crimes, while they were carryed on, the brethren of our perswasion openly protested even to the faces of the actors.

Touching Government and Obedience we know no controversy between us and the Conforming Clergy, that is purely Moral or Theological. Indeed there hath been political and law controversies, respecting the different constitutions of States and Kingdoms. Now some men to serve their own designs have made these to be taken for differences in Religion, when as they are agitated among States-men and Lawyers, without respect to any difference in Religion, and with much variety and uncertainty of opinion. And as for us we publicly profess to ascribe as much to Princes and Sovereign

reign powers, as is ascribed to them by the ancient Christian Church in any general Councell, or by any Protestant Church in any Synod or publike Confession thereof. And in the political Questions about royal prerogatives, and the priviledges of Parliaments, and the peoples immunities, we interpose not at all, for they are out of our Sphere, but in reference thereunto we acquiesce in the determinations of the laws of this Kingdom.

15. VVe doubt not but this free and open dealing will be our defence against those licentious Tongues and Pens, that have proclaimed the Religion of the Non-Conformists to be a Foolish Religion, when indeed it is no other than the Religion professed by the Church of *England*; and that our Principles of Government have a palpable inconsistency with the wellfare of Governours, when we offer an appeal concerning it to the whole Christian Church, both of the present and former ages.

As for state of Nonconformity, it is our grievance and distress, and it is not in the power of our own wills to help us. VVe affect not singularity, disunity or dissent from others, and so far as we are constrained to it, we take it for our infelicity. We grudge not at the liberty of others, but are so far glad on the behalf of able and faithfull men, as they are in a capacity of more publike service for God and his Church; and though we are dissatisfied in the way wherein they have gained it, yet we retain Charity and Peace towards them, and are willing to concur with them in the common interest of true Religion.

16. They are much mistaken in our case, who think it is the mere inexpedience of the things injoynd that we stick at. VVe question the truth of some assertions, and the lawfulness of some ordinances of worship, and fear the dangerous tendency of some forms and rules of Ministration, of which and of other matters in difference we are ready to render a particular account, when authority shall require it. VVe acknowledge that some parts of the matter of our dissent are com-



comparatively small things, and in no wise to be valued more than Unity and Peace. VVe lay the main stress on the main truths and duties of Christianity, and for these lesser things, we would bear with others in the belief and practice of them, but others will not bear with us in forbearing to own or use them, while we think them erroneous and forbidden, or at least do rationally doubt of their truth and lawfulness. Now this presseth upon us, that we may not do lesser evils that greater good may come, and therefore we cannot do these comparatively little things. For it is not a little thing to sin deliberately in the least matter, and the willfull breach of the least of God's Commandments is a contempt of his authority in the whole Law. And whereas we are commonly said to *strain at Gnats and swallow Camels*, if we be indeed convicted of such partiality, let us bear this brand of Hypocrites. In the mean while let our accusers know and dread the guilt of rash judgment.

Moreover if some of the things themselves be small, yet it is not a small thing, that is required of us about them, namely a declaration and subscription of our unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in large Humane Volumes, imposed by our Superiors, who acknowledge they are not infallible. VVe have not so much as our internal judgment and choice left to us about a multitude of humane ordinances and determinations. Our peaceable bearing and holding Communion with them, that practice these things, yea our quiet submission to the use thereof as tolerable sufficeth not, (as we apprehend it) but there must be also an hearty and intire approbation thereof as laudable. Had we sufficient authoritative warrant to believe, that these recognitions import no more than our peaceable behaviour toward the Church, as some have intimated, we would as readily subscribe the same as they. But we do not think it safe to proceed upon the presumption of such a meaning as hath no better warrant, and we dread to profess the approbation of the things we disallow.

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Furthermore, though in some regard we are more concerned about the controverted opinions, forms and ceremonies, to wit as they are bound upon all Conformists to be personally owned and used by them, (to which we may add the enforcing of Reordination, which is a bar set to many of our number) yet there are other things wherein the state of Religion is as much or more concerned. It is hard for us so to bind our selves under all the present orders and customs in the Ecclesiastical Polity, and its management, as to ingage against all necessary reformation. VVe are sensible how much the good of the Church, that is, the increase of true Godliness, lyes in the due exercise of Discipline, and we are very tender of setting any bar against it, by our own act.

17. But least by this intimation we may be thought to intend what indeed we do not, we declare that we will not endeavour any alteration of the Government in Church or State, as it is in the King, whose Civil and Ecclesiastical Supremacy we have before acknowledged; nor the alteration of the true Episcopal Office which Christ hath settled in his Church; nor will we endeavour any alteration in the Church, by any seditious or unlawfull means, but only by Prayer to God, by humbly Petitioning our Superiors, or obeying the King if he command it, or such like lawfull means, as belong to us in our places and callings.

18. We affect not Church-domination, (howsoever we have been reported to grasp at power in our own way, as much as others do in theirs) we only desire a liberty of discharging our duty to the Congregations, to which we are sent. VVe would exercise Discipline toward such only, as voluntarily submit thereunto. VVe would have no coercive power annexed unto it, nor temporal penalties immediately consequent to any Spiritual sentence. VVe utterly disclaim this opinion, that when the Clergy hath Excommunicated any man, the Magistrate is bound in Conscience to confiscate, banish, or otherwise punish meerly upon their sentence, without hearing or trying the cause by his laws at his own bar.

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We look upon Church Tyranny as the great calamity of Christendom, and would by no means have a hand in its advancement, under any form of Government whatsoever. Having read in History by what steps the Roman Clergy overtop'd Princes and Emperors, we can in no wise promote the twisting of Clergy domination by oaths and other publique engagements into the frames of secular Kingdoms, and that in precedence to the civil power.

19. All the reasons of our Non-conformity cannot be here expected by any that know upon what terms we stand. We make it our humble and earnest supplication to our Superiors, that by their favourable permission we might have leave to write and publish more largely and particularly, both touching our dissents, and in answer to the accusations made against us. For such a defence, as we now ask leave to make, hath hitherto been forborn, to avoid the displeasure of our Governors.

20. It is easie for that side which is uppermost to speak for their own way, that as much hath been written as may satisfy any that have a mind to be satisfied. But they should remember the common infirmity of Mankind, and what strange disparity there is in Mens understandings, and what diversity of apprehensions, especially in matters of doubtfull disputation. VVe profess in his sight who knows our hearts, that we have a mind to be satisfied, if we knew how. And there is rational evidence for the truth of what we speak, for that our dissatisfaction must needs be against our interest; if it were remediable. Any conscientious Principles narrower than the truth, entangle those that are governed by them; and our Principles of Non-conformity, if erroneous, are a great snare unto us, and keep us under such confinement, as is no way desirable by us. And therefore if we might be free, we would use it rather, and willingly retract that error, that puts us to so much trouble. And surely they judge too hardly of us, that think the supposed shame of a retraction, would keep us from embracing our own liberty and safety,

safety, and promoting the Churches Peace and Unity. If our Consciences were well secured, we would trust God with our reputation. To those that speak of our baffled cause, and charge us with invincible obstinacy after shamefull overthrows, we shall not now mention such Books of special note, and not tediously voluminous, as were written on our side in former times by men of reputation, that were never answered; we shall only mind them to consider, what answer hath been made to some later Published writings on our part, as the *Petition for Peace*, with the *Reformation of the Liturgy*, and the *last reply made to the Bishops by the Divines*, Commissioned together with them for the review of the *Common Prayer*, though the matter and season earnestly called for it. For they were presented to the Bishops before the act of Uniformity came forth, while the things for which we suffer were under publike consultation.

21. Our dissents can be no just provocation to any. Our equals that differ from us are upon this account no more reproached in us, than we in them, and we can no more be thought to reflect an imputation of evil on them, than they on us. Towards our Superiors our dissent carries in it no more indignity, than a supposition that they may err. And we agree with them in so much, as the wisdom of God hath made necessary to Christian concord.

22. His Majesty expressed his resolution to become the effectual moderator of our differences, and graciously accepted the proposals made by some of us with acknowledgment of their moderation. This he hath largely made known in his declaration concerning Ecclesiastical affairs, wherein he gives this Testimony to the Ministers of the Presbyterian perswasion, that attended on him in *Holland*. *To our great satisfaction and comfort we found them persons full of affection to us, and of zeal to the Peace of Church and State, and neither enemies, as they had been given out to be to Episcopacy or Liturgy; but modestly to desire such alterations in either as without shaking Foundations, might best allay the present distempers.*

ers. And he expressed himself in reference to those things wherein the learned men of either persuasion were agreed as followeth, *If upon these excellent foundations in submission to which there is such a harmony of affections, any superstructure should be raised to the shaking of those Foundations, and to the contracting or lessening of the blessed gift of Charity, which is a vital part of Christian Religion, we shall think our self very unfortunate, and even suspect that we are defective in that administration of Government, with which God hath intrusted us. And he saith farther, That he doth not think his reverence to the Church of England, as it is Established by Law, in the least degree diminished by condescensions; not peremptorily to insist on some particulars of ceremony, which howsoever introduced by the piety and devotion and order of former times, may not be so agreeable to the present, but may lessen that piety and devotion for the improvement whereof they might happily be introduced, and consequently may well be dispensed with.*

This gracious healing declaration was received with the thanks of the House of Commons, and with the applause of the people, and it was to our special joy. Had the moderation therein specified stood in force, we have no cause to doubt but that Tranquillity and Concord in the Church would have ensued. But the frustration thereof lay not on our parts. It is our comfort that we have earnestly fought Peace and Unity, though we have not so far prevailed, as to gain so much as the abatement of one Ceremony, but our Bonds have been made stronger, and the terms of our Ministerial liberty much harder to us, than they were in the former times of Prelacy.

22. Some indeed say that to indulge us any abatement of injunctions, even in things indifferent and mutable, would cherish us in our ungovernable persuasions, and the Church would yield up her authority to those Principles, that would be an everlasting hinderance of her settlement. These men speak as if our exclusion, not our conformity were desired. But against their uncharitable and unsober assertion, we offer

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our Principles already here testified to the tryal and judgment of all impartial and unprejudiced minds, and challenge our adversaries to gain say them, or to prove that we falsely pretend unto them.

23. The extravagant Pens of some Writers have made ridiculous and odious descriptions of us, to expose us to the common scorn and hatred. They would make the World believe that instead of the Precepts of the Gospell intelligibly set forth, we make a Religion of Metaphors and Allegories, and new phrases, of thin airy notions, frivolous and senseless nicities, and fanatick whimsies. This they fix promiscuously upon the Non-Conformists from passages collected out of some Writers, that go under that name. But suppose those passages as erroneous and frivolous as they would make them, would any party in the VWorld or they themselves be so dealt with? Should a collection of errors, absurdities, incongruities, injudicious expressions, and such like weaknesses be pick'd here and there out of the writings of this and the other Conformists, and then be Intituled the Religion of the Conforming Clergy. Let the Divinity of the Non-Conformists, that is extant defend it self, we are not carefull about this matter. Indeed we cannot boast that none among us are injudicious, yea, or that any one among us doth never write or speak an incongruous word. If our adversaries so boast of themselves and theirs, let them take the glory of it, we are not called to this boasting, or to compare our selves with others. It is too well known how great a part of the Clergy throughout Christendom (as indeed of all other sorts of men) are defective and imprudent in their expressions. But by insisting on this kind of exceptions, our adversaries have done us this right as in effect to tell the VWorld that the Non-Conformists are not deprived and silenced for Treason, Rebellion, Drunkenness, Swearing, Incontinences, Rayling, Insufficiency, Idleness, seldom Preaching, Pluralities, Non-Residence, and such like immoralities.

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Let not the progress of our just and necessary defence be taken for self exalting. For we do not exclude others, but only include our selves in that sobriety, from which some would exclude us, and we do this to shew that others ought to receive us, seeing we accord in the greater things, notwithstanding our lesser differences.

24. We earnestly disavow, and teach the people to beware of the conduct of pretended inspirations; and we own God's publick Laws written in Scripture and Nature for our perpetual Rule. The World knows that the rational evidence of Christian Religion, and of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, hath been as much owned among us, and as largely asserted by some of ours, as by any of them, that so speak, as if they were the only Propugnators and Preachers thereof. We take the Spirit's grand Testimony to the truth of the Gospel, not to stand in some inward unaccountable suggestion and perswasion, but in an objective evidence propounded to the reason of Mankind; though we likewise hold the Spirits internal teaching, and the gift of illumination to be necessary to saving Faith. We do not hunt after mysteries in words and phrases, yet we would not make void or lessen the great mystery of Godliness, and make no more of it than a Scheme of Moral Philosophy. We approve not affected Language, yet we would not have the things of the Spirit of God spoken in Scripture Language called *Canting*. We make it our business to understand the things we affirm, and to speak sense to our Hearers in the plainest words, and in preaching to avoid vain janglings, and impertinent curiosities, useless speculations, novelties, and vain ostentation of wit and fancy, and to insist on things essential or of great importance to Christian Piety, and whereinssoever we have done weakly, we desire to do better, and refuse not to learn even from our adversaries.

25. In man's Conversion to God we urge not the necessity of any thing that is unnecessary. We stand not on certain modes, methods and circumstances, in which it may be

brought about, wherein the wisdom of God proceeds variously towards several persons, according to the different circumstances of their condition. As for instance, we assert not a general necessity of this or that measure of humiliation, much less of a dismal despairing horror (as some have said of us) we press conviction and humiliation no farther than to make a sinner restless till he come to Christ, and find rest to his Soul in him. And we take not conversion to be (as some have slandered us) an embracing of our opinions, or an adhering to our party; but an internal principle of Faith, Hope and Love expressed in a sober, righteous and godly life. If this be it, which some mean, when they speak so highly of morality and virtue, we will not differ with them about the name. For morality or immorality taken not vulgarly but theologically, is no other than the conformity or inconformity of our minds and actions to God and his Laws. And that to preach morality in this sense is to preach Christ, we acknowledge as freely as any others. But we know the vulgar notion thereof respects the civil righteousness of the natural man, and for the sake of common hearers, who understand words, as they are commonly used among themselves, we think it necessary to distinguish between saving grace and moral virtue. Furthermore we say not, nor are we acquainted with them that do say, that the morally righteous man is at a greater distance from grace, than the prophane, and better be lewd and debauched than to lead an honest and virtuous life. We hear no such words out of the mouths of Non-Conformists, though some have suggested it against us, to make us odious. And it seems strange, that any should insinuate a charge of Antinomianism against us, by making the personated Non-Conformist to call the Doctrine of good works legal preaching, when it is so well known, that some of ours have done as much as any in confuting the Antinomian dotages. We teach none to call themselves Godly, merely because they hear Sermons, frequent Lectures, and meet together for Prayer and other Religious Exercises: yet our aim is that

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men should make Religion their business, and we encourage their diligence in attending on God's Ordinances, and redeeming the time, and helping each other forward in the way to Heaven.

26. Though we are accused to be of that Spirit that saith, *Stand by thy self, come not near to me, I am holier than thou*; yet we place not Holyness in any peculiar garb of profession, or in standing at a greater distance from others, than God would have us, We receive all men as much as either brotherly kindness or common charity will allow. VVe affect no greater singularity than the uncontroverted Non-Conformity to the VWorld makes necessary. Differences of persuasion in the matters controverted, we make not to be marks of distinction between good and bad men. VVe judge not any as ungodly upon the meer account of their Conformity, yea we have incomparably more value for a Godly Conformist, than for a meerly Opinionative Non-Conformist. VVe renounce not Communion in the publique worship of the Parish Churches, though for its outward form and order in some respects it be not that which is most desireable by us. It is our hearts desire and prayer to God, that the VVord, Prayer and Sacraments therein dispensed, may be blest to the great increase of true Godliness in those that attend thereon. Yea we wish so well to the ability and godliness of our opposites in these controversies, that it would be our great rejoycing, that every Parish Church in *England* were filled with an able Godly Minister though conformable. VVe own the Catholick Communion of Saints, and desire a part in the Prayers of all faithfull Christians, whether they pray by a set form or without it.

27. VVhereas we are charged with immodesty and boldness in our inquiries and conclusions; we profess that in the Doctrines of predestination, redemption, divine Grace, free will, original sin, justification, perseverance, and assurance of Salvation, we differ not from the Established Doctrine of the Church of *England*; and we approve her moderation

deration used in those Articles, which we take in the same sense with the English Episcopal Divines in general, that lived in Queen *Elizabeth's* and King *James's* times. And for our parts we judge that the controversies about these points might be lessened, and would gladly do our endeavours to the lessening of them.

28. Our Doctrine tends to unquietness and confusion no more than the common Doctrine of Protestants, and of the Church of *England* it self, for it is the same as we have shewed. And we protest against such citations to the contrary, as men bring out of writers reputed of our party, and renounce whatsoever is written or spoken contradictory to our here avowed Principles. And we think it not fair dealing in our adversaries to repeat and aggravate all intemperate passages vented in those times, when impetuous actings hurried men into extremities, and states-men and sword-men heightened the differences between Divines, and especially to do this after our professed moderation hath been acknowledged by our Governments. Besides, the generality or at least the far greater number of the silenced Ministers now living were not engaged in the late wars. And if these were allowed to preach the Gospel, we should be thankfull for the favour, though the rest remain excluded.

29. We acknowledge the importance of a publique settlement, and how necessary it is that both people and teachers be under the regulation and influence of authority. And that the willfull and indiscreet might be held in their due limits, we would not have things left at random, but under stated rules. We seek not to be received upon lawless terms, but are willing to submit to tryal, not only upon accusation of lewd scandal or insufficiency, or negligence in our calling, but of venting any error contrary to the received Doctrine, or of doing any thing contrary to peace and order. But it is unreasonable for any to urge this concession for the rigorous imposing of doubtfull and needless things, which tend to trouble and not to settle the Church. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to the

the Apostles and Elders, and Brethren assembled at *Jerusalem*, to lay upon the Churches no other burden than things necessary. And here we take notice of their impertinency, who think it enough to confute all our plea for moderation, by publishing quotations out of our writers, which were written against an intolerable toleration, to wit of heresies, blasphemies and open impieties, and not the indulgence which we have pleaded for. If they can see no *medium* between tolerating all things and tolerating nothing, others can. Besides it is an accommodation and union, that we have sought by a sufficient comprehensiveness in the publique constitution, and then therewithall an indulgence towards remaining Dissenters, but such as for the subject of it hath nothing that is intolerable. We have a true regard to our Brethren that are more streightened in their judgments than we are, and would not have them the worse for our liberty, if we could obtain it.

30. Though we have not the same latitude of judgment with Conformists in some points, yet we have the same Catholic Spirit to promote the common interest of Religion, and more especially the Protestant Reformation, and to dread the weakening or shattering of it by needless Schisms. We mind the way of unity and consistence, and retain healing principles, we hold it not our duty to publish all truths, when the unseasonableness thereof might cause disturbance; nor to defend lesser truths with the disadvantage of greater. We would not widen breaches nor make other mens opinions worse than they are, to commend our own. It is none of our persuasion that men are bound under pain of damnation to labour to establish God's publique worship in the greatest perfection by hazarding the Church's peace, and unsettling a good establishment, though less perfect. If by scruple of Conscience we cannot joyn in one Church Communion, yet we ought to keep the unity of Faith and Love. So far are we from assenting to that which some affirm, that where men part Communion, it is of necessity that they esteem one another impious, although we grant there is a fault on one side or both.

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31. VVe solemnly protest that we have thus declared for moderation not only or chiefly because we have need of it, but because the Church of God hath need of it, and because we think it the only way of peace and the common interest of Religion in these Kingdoms ; and if we stood where others now stand, we would give what we plead and pray for. It may be remembred, that those of our perswasion did seasonably declare their desires of unity, even during his Majesty's exile, and the Episcopal party then protested for moderation, and the first appearance of the hopefullness of an accommodation between the parties, was of no little avail to promote his Majesty's restauration, whom God preserve to reign long over us. If we or any of us have heretofore been more rigidly addicted to our own opinions, then stands with our now professed charity, we make a willing retraction thereof.

32. VVe have here set forth our principles that all may take notice, how we are mis-represented by those that make other representations of us. And we are ready to clear our selves against those that accuse us of contradicting them in our practice.

33. The exercise of our Ministry, which we continue in our present state of inconformity, is no way inconsistent with the professions here made. VVe assent and submit to the King's Ecclesiastical Authority, as we have amply shewed before, and we think we come not short of the conformable Clergy, in owning the authority of the higher powers in sacred things. Yet we believe that no humane power can nullifie our Ministerial Office, or disoblige us from our charge of fulfilling it according to our ability and opportunity, and as the necessity of Souls requireth of us. If we lived where our Ministry were not necessary, we were bound to forbear upon the Magistrates prohibition, and to remove to a Country where it is necessary, and a way open for us. But whatsoever others apprehend, to us it is most evident, that multitudes of Souls in the places where we live cry aloud for our help also. This apprehension of ours reflects no dishonour upon



upon the conscientious conformable Ministers, (for whose ability and industry we bless God,) but we heartily wish that the number of them were so proportionable to the people of this Land, that there were no need of us in this service. As for those that make slight work of the cure of Souls we pass not to be despised or judged by them for this carefullness towards the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

A Minister that is intolerable by being utterly insufficient, heretical, or otherwise destructive to the ends of the Ministry, we are not obliged to honour, but to disown. It is our part to make the most of a tolerable though weaker Ministry, and to do what we may to countenance God's publick service in all places. If we live where the publick authority hath set up worthy Ministers, our duty is to promote their reputation with the people, and to farther the success of their labours, and to attend on their Ministry when we are not necessarily hindered. And our labours in concurrence with them can be no grievance to any, to whom it is not a grievance, that their Lords service, and the success of their own indeavours, should be farthered by their fellow-servants. Where the publick Churches cannot contain the multitude of inhabitants, that should resort unto them (which is unquestionably the case of *London*) it is no affront or injury to the most worthy Ministers, and no unwarrantable division, at the same time to hold other Religious meetings, as the number of the people shall make needfull. Though our Ministry be alike necessary in general; yet at vvhat time, in vvhat place, to vvhat numbers of people, and in vvhat other circumstantial measures it is necessary to be exercised, the case may be very different vvith severall persons, as they are placed in different circumstances. In vvch diversity it is the vvork of prudence to discern vvhat is duty by that general rule, let all things be done to edification. It is the end that of right alvvays limits the means, and it is our part so to manage our calling that vve may best serve our Generation, according to the vvill of God. According

to this Rule we endeavour to steer our course.

34. We do what in us lyes to avoid the provoking of our Governours, and all appearance of contempt to their authority. We invade no mans right, we resist not the civil power, nor break the peace, nor cause tumults; nor give occasion thereof. We abhorre seditious conventicles, insurrections were never contrived in our meetings, nor in any, whereof we are conscious. Experience hath witnessed our peaceableness, and Disloyalty or Sedition is not found amongst us by the most inquisitive of our Adversaries.

35. VVe have not forsaken the Parochial Assemblies, but have joyned in the service of God there performed, and some of us do it in our ordinary course, and others of us have not declined it of set purpose, but as our absence is caused by that necessary work of the Ministry, whereunto we are called. Some of us have Communicated with the said assemblies in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; Yet we would not have our charity and peaceableness mistaken for an indifferency unto Communion with all Parochial Churches and Ministers whatsoever, or for a full satisfaction or acquiescence in the whole, and all particulars of the Liturgy, so as to be able to declare our unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing therein contained.

Our proceeding is as even and regular, as the straits and difficulties into which we are cast, will suffer it to be. VVe would that they who charge us with irregularity and disorder in our actions, would with charity and candor consider the circumstances of our condition, and help us out of those distresses that force us at sometimes to be more severed from them, than otherwise we would or might be. VVe desire the Clergy of *England* to take notice, that we have no mind to promote the Popish design of nullifying and treading down the Parish Churches and Ministers. VVe are well aware how Papists make a harvest of the divisions of Protestants, and hope to do their work by the dissensions between Conformists and Non-Conformists. As the precious interest of Protestantism  
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ingageth us, we do what we may to preserve a worthy esteem of the Religion of the Church of *England*, and we humbly supplicate them, who have cast us out, to consider how they may receive us again upon the account of this common interest, which (God is our witness) we value more than our own particular enlargement.

36. A great part of the invectives written against us, is made up of the pretended weaknesses and mis-behaviours imputed to those that go under the name of Non-Conformists. To this we say first, that it is a palpable injury to burden us with the various parties with whom we are now herded by our ejection in the general state of Dissenters, and to make us responsible for them all. Nor are we justly chargeable with all the absurdities and miscarriages of such as are of our own persuasion. But let it here be minded, what the Scripture saith, *in many things we offend all*, and that none of ours pretend to be more than men in their imperfect state; as also that besides the huge multitudes of common hypocrites, who by open intemperance, unrighteousness and ungodliness, notoriously discover the falshood of their profession, (by which sort in general none are more hated than we are,) there be many specious hypocrites, who are the servants of sin, under the shew of greater zeal for God, and these will be the blemish of all Religions societies, into which they are admitted. Now we would not that any detected hypocrisie should be palliated, nor that the real faults of the sincere should be unproved. But promiscuously to asperse a whole sort of men known to be strict and serious in their profession, and to describe their way in general as a course of hypocrisie or folly, is like to do no good but much mischief, especially in exposing seriousness in Religion on all sides, to the scorn of the irreligious.

When we look through the big and swelling words of crimination to the matter it self, we find little more in it than their meer inconformity, blazond with ugly terms, and the names of horrid sins put upon it. For the accusers call them proud, froward, false, fierce, sullen, traytorous, seditious,

clamorous: and an unruly generation upon no better proof than that they have said it: The *sarrago* of the late cunningly contrived defamations, if well examined, will be found really to produce against them little more than such weaknesses and swervings, as are common to any, even the most moralized sort of men.

Indeed we find this against us, if it be material, that our Religion hath not made our Plough-men Courtiers, nor our Trades-men Philosophers. VVe never took it for any part of the work of true grace to make men of rustick wits, and breeding to become gentile, or to raise our plain people to the accomplishments of the learned. Yea such as excell in grace may be very mean and low in the gifts of nature, and speak so incongruously as to make themselves ridiculous to proud wits. But should Ministers make a scorn of them for defects in this kind, and have more value for an ungodly sort, that are of finer wits and better breeding? If so, there is not the same mind in them that was in Christ, who said with rejoicing, *I thank thee O Father Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes.* Nevertheless for ought we find, the people of our persuasion, according to their rank and quality in the VVorld, are not inferior to others in point of discretion, civility, good neighbourhood, and acceptable conversation among men; in all which their Religion is a furtherance, and no disadvantage to them.

VVe will not justify our favourers in what they are reprovable; but then let every one bear his own guilt, and let not the innocent be burdened without cause. VVe as well as the accusers take notice of divers things in some of ours which are not justifiable, and yet not remediable by us in our present state. The weaker sort of true Christians are liable to errors and failings, that occasion trouble to themselves and others: and there be many that have no troublesome differences in Religion, because they have no Religion. Shall these irreligious persons because they are not troublesome, be  
more.

more esteemed and thought better Christians, than serious, zealous and conscientious persons, because peradventure they give us some trouble through their mistakes? The Pastors should not value people by the interest of the flesh, but of Christ. To what end have they received their Pastoral Office, which is to help the weak, and to heal that which is lame, that it be not turned out of the way, if they cannot bear with such; nor restore them in the Spirit of meekness? Besides, let the breaches, offences and exasperations of these times be considered, and it cannot seem strange, that the weaker sort of sufferers should be more averse, than they ought to be, from those by whom they suffer, especially when in many places their more able teachers are driven from among them by the *five mile Act*, and they are left to such as will heighten their averſation. We would our reprovers would help us for their parts to make our people better. Whereas some have charged us with cherishing their naughty humours for unworthy ends, we thought all might understand, that if we basely sought our own profits, we might make a better trade of Conformity, than of seeking a sorry maintenance, by serving the sins of our adherents in this poor condition of outcasts. VVe desire not to hold the people as appropriated to our selves; but teach them highly to esteem all faithfull Ministers for their works sake, and we are glad of their profiting by others as by our selves. VVe are not conscious of willfull connivence at their faults. VVe humour none in their injurious thoughts of Governors, or speaking evil of dignities. VVe teach men to fear God and honour the King, yea to honour all men and love the Brotherhood, to bridle their tongues, to be meek and lowly, no busie bodies, but to do their own work with quietness. VVe exhort all to unity with the whole Catholick Church, and to be at peace among themselves. The truth is, there is too much wrath and bitterness, railing and intemperate language on all sides, and we condemn it as much in those that are among us as in others, and are more offended at it in them than in others. And we think our accusers have little reason

reason so to accuse and judge us and ours, as if they took themselves and theirs to be sinless in this kind. The Lord forgive and heal us all, and increase the number of the sons of peace, and true peace-makers.

37. Whereas a remarkable writer hath published these words, *we should be reconciled if the Presbyterian Ministers would persuade their people to do, what they can do themselves*, We declare to the world, that we heartily embrace these terms of reconciliation. And as we have done already, we will not cease to do our uttermost to persuade them, upon whom we have any influence, and we would gladly come to the tryal to see which party should outvie the other in forwardness in allaying the present distempers, and lessening the differences, and drawing on towards peace and union.

38. We have here done our part to remove the offences taken at us by testifying to all men, that conscientious dissatisfaction, and not carnal interest, or a Spirit of opposition, is the ground of our Non-Conformity: and to bring such as differ from us to be more in charity with us, than to judge that we are utterly unworthy or incapable of the publick Ministry, or that such persons as for ignorance and lewdness are scandalous and contemptible among their Neighbours, are more tolerable in that sacred office than we are, or that gross insufficiency, non-residence, and other hainous negligence should be made less criminal, than our dissent about the ceremonies, subscriptions, renunciations, and such like injunctions.

We submit what we have done to the wisdom, piety and clemency of our Governours. We acquiesce in Gods wise and holy determinations concerning us. And we resolve through his grace to abide stedfast and unmoveable in our subjection and loyalty to our Sovereign, in our due obedience to those that are put in authority under him, in our earnest endeavours of holiness, unity and peace in the Church, in brotherly love to all faithfull Christians, in charity to all men, and in the Faith and Patience of the Disciples and Servants of Jesus Christ.

WVe



We are moved at this time to publish this account of our  
 pacifick principles and inclinations, that we might promote  
 (what in us lies) the true bond of union among sincere Prote-  
 stants. These though of different persuasions in points of  
 lesser moment have one joynt stock, the Protestant Religion,  
 for which they are all jealous, and at this time alarm'd by  
 the imminent danger from an irreconcilable and restless adver-  
 sary, that would destroy them all. All true Protestants have  
 their interest not a part from, but in strict conjunction with  
 the whole body of that profession, they have no possible way  
 of securing themselves but in the general good of the state of  
 England; They cannot fly to the refuge of any forreign Prince  
 or State, they acknowledge no forreign jurisdiction, all their  
 stake lyes at home. VWhereupon one would think that the  
 common safety should incline all the several parties to strength-  
 en their common interest by a good and firm accord, upon just  
 and reasonable terms; And whosoever remain averse from it  
 seem to value a partial interest, and their own peculiar state  
 more than the Protestant Religion it self.

A just latitude of Church-state in the established order, for  
 the comprehending of all those whose more moderate Princi-  
 ples render them capable of being conjoyned in one settled Na-  
 tional Government, and for others, who by reason of their  
 narrower principles cannot enter into such conjunction, a suf-  
 ficient yet duly limited indulgence are the things, which we  
 humbly propose and earnestly desire. We seek not the de-  
 stroying of foundations, but some necessary reformati-  
 ons and forbearances. For us to set forth the propound-  
 ed latitude in the particular limits thereof, would be presump-  
 tuous both in reference to Superiors, and to the parties con-  
 cerned in it. We humbly leave it to the prudent and pious  
 consideration of our Governours. This grand affair is acknow-  
 ledged to be full of difficulty, caused by the passions, preju-  
 dices and interests of the several parties: nevertheless we  
 hope that the prudence and patience of those who sit at the  
 helm of Government, is able to master it. Next under the  
 power,

power, wisdom and goodness of God standing on our side, our help stands in the wisdom and piety of our Sovereign and his Parliament. His most excellent Majesty in his declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs hath mentioned particular concessions on both sides, and a harmony of affection therein, which he calls excellent foundations to build upon. The moderation specified in that gracious declaration would do much to the present healing of our breaches in great part, and would set us in the surest way for as perfect healing thereof, as may ordinarily be hoped for in the imperfect state of things in this World.

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**FINIS**

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THE  
Nonconformist's  
P L E A

FOR  
LAY-COMMUNION  
WITH THE

Church of *ENGLAND*.

Together with a Modest Defence of  
*Ministerial Nonconformity*, and the  
Exercise of their *Ministry*.

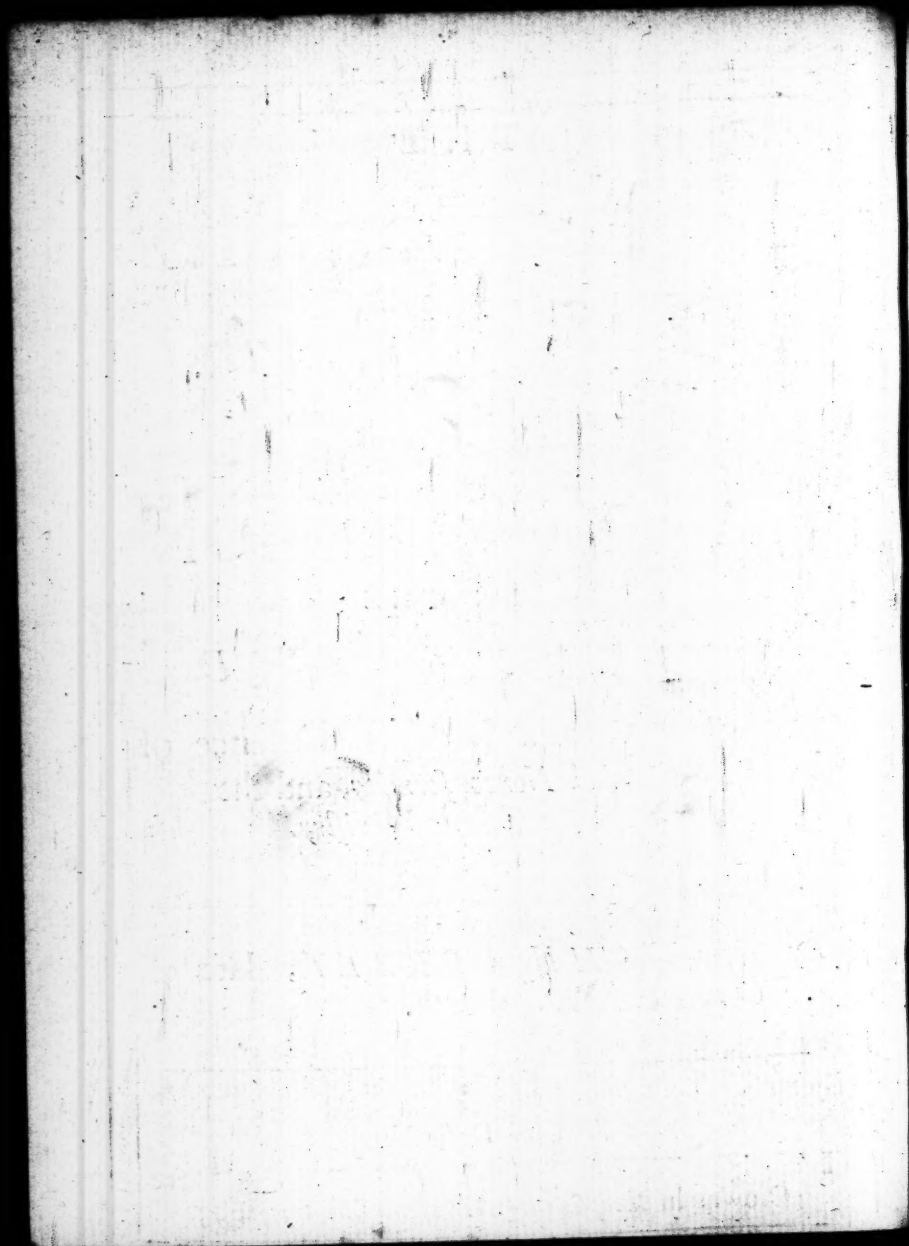
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By Mr. *JOHN CORBET*, late of  
*CHICHESTER*.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurst*, at the Bible and three  
Crowns in *Cheapside* near *Mercers Chappel*. 1683.



AN  
ADVERTISEMENT  
TO THE  
READER.

**H**ERE thou hast some Remains of the Reverend and Learned Mr. Corbet late of Chichester ; Those that knew him say, that he was a man endued with the wisdom that is from above, that is first pure, and then peaceable , gentle, ( meek, moderate,) and easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisie ; therefore it is conceived that any thing which he had designed for publick use, may be well accepted of , by all those that desire to follow after peace with all men, so far as is consistent with purity : Whether the design of these Remains of his be not to vindicate the truth, and to promote purity first, and then peace, is left to thee to judg after thou hast impartially perused and considered them in the

fear of God; and if in any measure they conduce to so good an end, it is hoped thou wilt be thankful to God for the benefit which the Church of Christ, and therein thy self, mayst receive by the use of them. Thou hast them just as they were left under his own hand; if himself had lived to publish them, thou mightest possibly have had them in some better method: but it is not thought fit that any other person should take upon him to alter any thing in them.

THE



## The Nonconformists Plea for Lay- Communion with the Church of *England*, &c.

**N**otwithstanding my Nonconformity, and the exercise of my Ministry in that state, I am inclined upon the following considerations to have communion with Parish-Churches in the worship of God, at those times in which our own Congregations do not require my presence therein.

1. I own Parish-Churches, having a competent Minister, and number of credible Professors of Christianity, for true Churches, and the Worship there performed, as well in the Liturgy or Common prayer, as in the preaching of the word, and prayer before and after Sermon, to be in the main sound and good for the substance or matter thereof. And I may not disown the same in my practice by a total neglect thereof, for my judgment and practice ought to be concordant.

2. Tho I judg their form of Worship to be in many respects less perfect than is to be desired; yet I have found my heart spiritually affected and raised towards God therein, and more especially in the receiving of the Lords Supper. I judg that this form may be used formally by the Formal, and spiritually by those that are Spiritual. It is my part to make the the best of it, being the Established Form.

3. I am desirous of joining, as far as I may, with all Congregations worshipping God in Christ, out of my high regard to all Christian Worship, and out of my love to the communion of Saints universally, and a desire to testify that I am a truly Catholick Christian.

4. Tho

4. Tho I am constrained by force of conscience to be among those that dissent from the enjoined Conformity; yet my design and business is not to advance a severed party as such, but true Christianity or godliness among all that profess the Christian Faith, and what in me lies to keep up a Reverend esteem of Gods Ordinances celebrated among them all.

5. Tho I have reason to have a very tender regard to those that own and accept my Ministry, for their edification and satisfaction, yet by ways of love and concord I am to seek the edification of others also, while I lay no stumbling-block before the one or the other sort.

*Against the putting of this intention in practice, I meet with these Objections.*

*Obj.* 1. I may seem a contradiction to my self, and to justify what I disallow, having refused to give my assent and consent to all and every thing contained in the Book of Common-Prayer.

*Ans.* 1. The denying of assent and consent to all and every thing contained in that Book, doth not gainsay the lawfulness of partaking in that Worship, it being sound for the substance in the main, and the mode thereof being laudable in divers forms and orders, and passable in the most, though in some offensive, inconvenient, or less perfect.

2. The chief matters for which I refuse to declare an assent as is enjoined, lye not in the ordinary Morning and Evening Prayer, but in other parts, as the Order of Baptism, Confirmation, Burial of the dead, &c. and in certain Rubricks or Rules to which I cannot subscribe.

*Obj.* 2. It is to countenance a more defective and inconvenient way of worship, and it tends to the rooting of others in their formality, and to the encreasing of their number.

*Ans.* 1. My partaking in any Divine worship which is holy and good for the matter, and allowable or passable for the mode in the main, doth not involve me in the blame of some sinful defects therein, to which I consent not, and which I cannot redress.

2. I do not acquiesce in this Form of worship only, nor do I by my example induce others so to do, seeing in other Congregations I both dispencc and attend upon the word and prayer in another Form, and judg it necessary for me so to do.

3. It is to me indubitable that this form is so far profitable and edifying, as that meerly for the defects found therein, there is no cause of renouncing it, or the Communion of the Churches for its sake, especially while other prayer and the preaching of the word is not thereby excluded.

*Object.* 3. It is against our engagements for reformation.

*An.* 1. I am engaged to endeavour reformation only according to my power and calling, and this practise doth not gainsay my indeavours of the same within those limits.

2. My engagement to indeavours of reformation, doth not necessitate me to unwarrantable separation.

3. My engagement to indeavours of reformation, doth also engage me against Schism.

*Object.* 4. It will offend ( that is to say, displease ) many of my own side.

*An.* 1. They have no reason to be more offended with me for practising according to my principle, than I am offended with them for practising according to theirs.

2. It is a trouble to me to do any thing in Religion, displeasing to those that are seriously religious, and more especially to those that own my Ministry, and suffer under the same impositions under which I do; but I may not sin for their sakes by a renouncing of true Churches, or by a perpetual neglect of communion with them.

*Object.* 5. It may prove an occasion of raising a greater enmity against those that cannot be satisfied to partake in this worship, yea, it may stir up a greater severity against them.

*An.* This objection ( if that which is suggested in it be true ) is of great moment, for I must have a tender regard to conscientious brethren and must not use my liberty to be an occasion of their suffering. But to this I say,

1. The moderate judgment and practise of some ( who in the mean time have maintained their plea for reformation, and exercised their Ministry according to their capacities and opportunities ) hath been advantagious to the general interest of Nonconformists.

2. If so bad a consequence should indeed follow, as is objected, I would for that season forbear the said use of my liberty, and partake with my brethren in their sufferings.

*Object.*

*Object.* 6. It may weaken my own party, and make many of them more indifferent towards reformation.

*Ans.* 1. I disclaim being of a party as such : I confine not godliness to any peculiar way narrower than mere Christianity. If any among us place their Religion in being of a party, they deceive their own souls, and it behoves me being a Teacher among them to let them understand so much.

2. While I use my liberty, and shew my moderation and charity towards all true Churches, I do not shew an indifferency towards all opinions, and forms, and constitutions; but by word and deed I manifest a desire and endeavour of the best constitution, that hath the greatest tendency to make the best Christians, and to advance holiness and peace in the Churches.

*Object.* 7. It may raise suspitions that I may proceed further in Conformity, and that I am but a lukewarm Nonconformist.

*Ans.* 1. The Kingdom of God stands not either in Conformity or Nonconformity as such.

2. I desire that my zeal in the matter of Nonconformity may be proportionable; that is neither more nor less than the thing it self requires.

3. I am not willing to stand at a greater distance from others than I needs must.

4. How ready soever I am to pursue peace and concord, I am not like to conform, till the grounds of my Nonconformity, which are with me of great weight, be removed.

*Object.* 8. Hereby I may lose or lessen my reputation and interest among those of my own side.

*Ans.* 1. My reputation and interest among men, must give place to the pleasing of God, and the keeping of a good conscience.

2. To me the most valuable benefit of reputation is an advantage thereby gained of being acceptable and successful towards men in the work of the Ministry; and that which is most advantageous hereunto, is the reputation of integrity, and to do all things advisedly, honestly, peaceably, without partiality, hypocrisy and selfishness, is the best means of such reputation.

*Object.* 9. It will not please those of the other side, unless I absolutely conform; and it may be some of them will despise and hate me the more.

*An.* 1. My design is not man pleasing, and I think it looks not like such; I were very ill advised indeed, if while I venture the displeasing of my own, I should aim at the pleasing of a different party.

2. In reference to the other side, my design is not to please them, but to convince them, that what in me lies, I follow after Church-peace and concord, and that the cause of the divisions that are, lies not on my part.

3. Tho on the Conforming side there may be some, who hate those most that come nearest to Conformity, if they are not thorough therein; yet there be others, who are more valuable, that are of a better spirit, with whom my moderation may have good effects.

*Ob.* 10. It may hazard a breach in our own congregation, and the dissolution thereof, as things now stand with us, and consequently hinder the good of souls, that is now gained by the word and prayer.

*An.* 1. Indeed such an evil is carefully to be avoided in this time of our difficulty and danger; but I rationally hope that it will not so fall out: Our friends are not ignorant of the latitude of my principle, and the practise here propounded will be no great surprisal to them, it being no more than what I declared that I did before I came to my present station among them.

2. I shall keep a watchful eye upon this concern; if I see any distemper that threatens a breach arising upon this occasion, I will for a while suspend my liberty, and I will proceed herein no otherwise than they can bear, I will be calm and gentle towards them, and not carry it peremptorily in any wise. And this I shall do not for my own private ends (the Searcher of hearts knows) but sincerely for their good.

3. I will by degrees insinuate into them the equity of their bearing with me in my persuasions, as I bear with them in theirs, and of allowing me the liberty of my own acts in things that concern my self alone, when in such acts as concern the society, I do nothing without their consent.

4. If it should come to pass that they will impose upon me what is not fit for me to comply with; in that case, I will not violently break from, nor stay to make breaches among them, but quickly withdraw my self.

## The Sum of the Matter.

I consult not my private interest in the case, but am sincerely solicitous to know and do herein what is my duty to do.

I would do what I can, to justify my Catholick principle and spirit, and I would abstain from the appearance of unwarrantable separation.

I would give no occasion to any of disowning or reproaching a form of Divine Worship which is found in the substance thereof, and accepted of God from the sincere, tho it be less perfect in divers material points, and less convenient for the mode.

I would in all things be a faithful guide to the people to whom I preach the Gospel, I would lead them in the way of peace and concord, and be free from giving them an occasion of withdrawing from the established worship more than is necessary.

I would shew my self a freeman governing my own acts according to my conscience, and not subject to the opinions and affections of others, or the imagined interests of a party.

If I cannot mollie them that seek to suppress me, I would render them more inexcusable.

I would testify, what in me lies, that Nonconformists are capable of an accommodation, and silence them that gainsay it.



## A Defence of my Endeavours for the Work of the MINISTRY.

**T**HAT I might not be wanting to my just Vindication in this Cause, I hold myself obliged to present the aforesaid Defence to the consideration of all impartial Readers: it takes its rise from the several heads of the Bishops charge against me, all which were owned by himself before many Witnesses, and are here set down.

1. That forasmuch as I did not exercise the Ministry in subordination to the Bishop, and as regulated by him, I transgressed against the nature of my Office, as not being the Office of a Pastor mentioned Eph. 4. 11.
2. That I violate my oaths and promises which I made at my Ordination, to obey the Bishop or Ordinary.
3. That I trespass against the Right of the Bishop, upon the account of exercising the Ministry where he is the Pastor.
4. That I make a Schism in the Church.
5. That I violate the Authority of the Civil Magistrate.

To these particulars, the several Heads of my Defence following, are a direct Answer.

1. That I have received from Christ the Office of a Pastor mentioned Eph. 4. 11. and that I am bound in my present state to fulfil it.
2. That I am not obliged either by the nature of my Office, or by any oath or promise, or by being under the regulation of Authority, to exercise my Ministry no otherwise than as in subordination to, and as authorised and regulated by the Bishop of the Diocese.
3. That I invade not the Right of the Diocesan Bishop in exercising the Ministry where he claims the right of being the Pastor.

4. *That I do not violate any true bonds of Church-Unity, nor in any respect cause divisions and offences.*

5. *That I do not violate the Authority of the Civil Magistrate.*

§ 1. *That I have received from Christ, the Office of a Pastor, mentioned, Eph. 4. 11. And that I am bound in my present state to fulfil it.*

**T**HE Ministry that I have received, is the sacred office of Presbyterate, to which I am ordained according to the form of Ordination that was established in the Church of England.

That this office is of divine right, I take for granted; and that according to the Scripture it is the office of a Pastor, mentioned Eph. 4. 11. I thus prove.

1. Wheresoever this office is set forth in the Scripture, it is set forth as the office of a spiritual Pastor or Bishop, which is to feed the Flock of God by teaching and ruling it: And a Presbyter who is a sacred Officer of the Christian Church, but not a Bishop or Pastor, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. If it be said, that this Office is otherwise set forth in Scripture, or that a Presbyter, who is a sacred Officer of the Christian Church, yet no Bishop, is there mentioned, let the Assertor shew the place or places.

If it be said, that this Order of Presbyterate may be of divine institution, yet not defined or expressed in Scripture, I desire satisfactory proof from some other Authority; both of its being of divine institution, and what its nature is.

2. To have the Power of the keys of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins in Christs name; as his commissioned officer, is to have Episcopal or Pastoral Power, and this Power belongs to the said Office of Presbyterate.

Forasmuch as some distinguish the Power of the keys into that which is in *foro interiore*, or the Court of Conscience within, and that which is in *foro exteriore*, in the exterior Court, to wit, that of the Church; the former of which is said to belong to the Bishop and the Presbyter, and the latter to the Bishop only. I further inforce my argument; 1. The Scripture makes no such distinction; and where the Law distinguisheth not, we may not distinguish. 2. The distinction in this case is vain, for all power that belongs to the Pastors of the Church, purely respects the Conscience, and it respects the Conscience as having the conduct of the outward man, and that in reference to Church-communion, as well as other matters. 3. If Presbyters may in the name of Christ, bind the impenitent, and loose the penitent as to the conscience, which is the greater and primary binding and loosing, then by parity of reason, and that with advantage, they may bind and loose as to Church-communion, which is the lesser secondary and subsequent binding and loosing.

3. That Officer is a Pastor or Bishop, that hath a power of Authoritative declaring or judging in Christs name, that this or that wicked person in particular is unworthy of fellowship with Christ and his Church, and of charging the congregation in Christs name, not to keep company with him, as being no fit member of a Christian society; & also a Power of *authoritative declaring or judging* in Christs Name, that the same person repenting of his wickedness, and giving evidence thereof, is meet for fellowship with Christ and his Church, and of requiring the congregation in Christs Name again to receive him into their Christian fellowship; for these powers are no other than the powers of Excommunication and Ecclesiastical absolution: Now the Presbyter hath apparently the said Powers, as he can undoubtedly declare, and judge, and charge as aforesaid, touching this or that person or particular; all particulars being included in the general, he hath undoubtedly a Power of applying the Word in Christs Name as well personally as generally.

4. For the further clearing of what is already argued, let it be considered, that an Authoritative Teacher in the Church commissioned by Christ, is also a Pastor; for the government of a Pastor is only by the Spiritual Sword, which is the Word of God; and the discipline which he exerciseth, is no more than the personal application of the same word to judge the impenitent, and to absolve the penitent in Christs Name; and he that Authoritatively teaches in

in Christs Name(as the Presbyter doth)can do so much in the personal Application of the Word.

5. The Pastoral Authority of Presbyterate is further cleared by many passages in the publick forms of the Church of England touching that order.

In the very form of my ordination according to the ancient use of this Church, I received the office of a Pastor and Successor of the Apostles; I mean not in their Apostolick but Pastoral office; The form was this; Receive the holy Ghost; whose sins thou remittest, they are remitted; and whose sins thou retainest, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and his Holy Sacraments, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *Amen*. Now the former part hereof is intirely and completely the form of Words used by our Saviour, *Joh* 20. 22, 23. towards the Apostles, expressing their Pastoral Authority; and the latter part, Be thou a faithful dispenser, &c. is no derogation or diminution from the Power granted in the former part. If the Presbyters are not the Apostles successors in the Pastoral Authority, how could they have right to that form of ordination?

In the form of ordering Priests or Presbyters in one of the prayers after the mentioning of Christs sending abroad into the world, his Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists Doctors, & Pastors, there follows thanksgiving to God for calling those that were then to be ordered Priests, to the same Office and Ministry of salvation of mankind. Whence it appears, that this Office is the same with some of the forementioned kinds. And what can it be but that of Doctors and Pastors?

This Church did before the last alteration made *Anno* 1662. in solemn form of words require the Presbyters, when they were ordained, to exercise the discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded; and this Realm received the same according to the commandments of God.

And that they might the better understand what the Lord hath commanded therein, this Church did appoint also, that at the ordering of Priests there be read for the Epistle that portion of *Acts* 20. which relates St. Paul's sending to *Ephesus*, and calling for the Elders of the Congregation, with his exhortation to them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock, among whom

whom the Holy Ghost hath made them Overseers, to rule the congregation of God. Or else *1 Tim. 3.* which sets forth the Office and due qualifications of a Bishop. These portions of Scripture this Church appointed to be read to the Presbyters, as belonging to their Office, and to instruct them in the nature of it. And afterwards the Bishop speaks to them that are to receive the office of Priesthood in this form of words. *You have heard, brethren, as well in your private examination, as in the exhortation and the holy lessons taken out of the Gospel, and the Writings of the Apostles, of what dignity, and of how great importance this Office is whereunto ye are called* — That is to say, the Messengers, the Watchmen, the Pastors and Stewards of the Lord, to teach, to premounish, to feed, to provide for the Lords Family.

I acknowledg that the passages here alledged are taken out of the old Book of Ordination, that was established in this Church till the late alterations made *Anno 1662.* if those alterations signify another meaning about the several Holy Orders than what was signified in the old Book, then the sense of the Church of *England* in these times differs from the sense of the same Church in all times preceeding the said Alterations; but if they signify no other meaning than what was signified in the old Book, my citations are of force to shew what is the sense of this Church, as well of the present as of the former times about this matter.

Here I must take notice, that in opposition to part of what hath been alledged, it was asserted, That that part of *1 Tim. 3.* which contains the office and qualification of a Bishop, was read at the Ordination of Presbyters, not because it belonged to their Office, but because it was joyned with that which follows touching the office of a Deacon, then likewise read as properly concerning the office of a Presbyter, pretended to be no other than the Deacon there mentioned.

To this I answer, If the Presbyter in the Church of *England* be indeed no other than the Deacon spoken of, *1 Tim. 3.* it seems strange that this Church, yea and the Universal Church; should so miscall an Officer, as to give him a name, *viz. Presbyter*, which the Scripture always appropriates to another Officer (as is pretended) and to neglect the Scripture name of this Office, *viz. Deacon*. It is strange that an Officer said to be no other than the Deacon there spoken of, should have the power of the keys, the same form of Ordination which Christ used towards his Apostles. If it  
were



were so, it is likewise strange that the qualifications of the said Deacon should be appointed to be read at the Ordination of a *Presbyter*, as properly belonging to him; and also at the Ordination of a Deacon inferior to a *Presbyter*, as properly belonging to him, the former part of the Chapter touching a Bishop, being omitted. Besides all this, the new Book of Ordination puts the matter out of doubt, and evidently refutes the aforesaid evasion. For in it the latter part of *1 Tim.* 3. beginning at verse 8. touching the Office of Deacon, is appointed to be read at the ordering of Deacons; and the same is not appointed to be read at the ordering of Priests, but another portion of Scripture, *viz.* Eph 4.7. &c. Furthermore, if the Deacon mentioned in *Timothy* be no other than the subject *Presbyter*, I would know in what place of Scripture the Deacon of the Church of *England*, inferior to a *Presbyter*, is set forth. And be it noted, that the Deacon of this Church is not so much the Deacon of Tables, as of the Word; and therefore a *Presbyter* must needs be degraded in being made no more than a Deacon of the Word.

Hitherto I have insisted on the nature of my Office, and have proved it to be the Office of a Pastor. Now I proceed to prove, That in my present state I am bound to fulfil it.

Being dedicated to this Ministry, I stand under a perpetual obligation to fulfil it, according to my ability and opportunity, and as the necessity of souls requireth of me. And whatsoever some think, the thing is most evident, That the souls of men cry aloud for all the help that can possibly be given them by those whom Christ hath qualified and called to the work of the Ministry, whether Conformists or Nonconformists.

This apprehension reflects no dishonour upon conscientious Conforming Ministers, for whose ability and industry I bless God. But the number of them is not so proportionable to the people of this Land, as to make the labours of those that are cast out, to be needless. The harvest is great, and the labourers are too few.

As for this City, in which are six Parishes within the Gates, besides two in the Suburbs, I leave it to the consideration of those that know the state thereof, whether there be sufficient care taken for the preaching of the Gospel; when as there is no settled preaching on the Lords days, or week days, in any of the Parish Churches. The Parish in which I dwell, hath for many years had



no Minister at all, and the two Parishes without the Gates for many years have had neither Ministers nor Churches, in one of which is the house that was licensed by his Majesty for our meeting. The only settled preaching is at the Cathedral, performed sometimes by the Superior Clergy, but mostly by a greater number of others in their courses, who generally living at a distance, cannot be so well known to the people as their appointed Teachers ought to be; and let them that know the place of preaching consider and judge, whether it can contain the inhabitants, if all should repair thither.

It is not to be despised or judged by them, who make slight work of the cure of Sou's, for whom Christ hath given himself a ransom: Certainly they are more precious than to be exposed to perish for lack of sufficient instruction and exhortation, rather than preachers authorized by Christ, if silenced by men, when not disobedient to any ordinance prescribed by his word, should speak to them that they might be saved. The necessary means of saving souls, such as is the due publick preaching of the Gospel, together with personal instruction, is incomparably more valuable than the maintaining of uniformity in little opinions, and ceremonies, and other accidental forms and orders.

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§ 2. *That I am not obliged either by the Nature of my Office, or by any Oath or Promise, or by being under the regulation of Authority, to exercise my Ministry no otherwise than as in subordination to, and as authorized and regulated by the Bishop of the Diocess.*

**T**HIS Head hath Three distinct Branches to be distinctly proved, whereof the first is, That I am not obliged by the Nature of my Office to exercise my Ministry no otherwise than in subordination to, and as authorized and regulated by the Bishop of the Diocess.

1. The Nature of this Office doth not require it either in reason, or from the declared will of Christ: first not in reason, for there is evidently no reason in the nature of the office, being the office of a Bishop or Pastor, that it cannot be exercised but in subordination to a Diocesan Bishop: if any say that there is, let him shew it.

2. Christ who is the Author and only proper giver of all spiritual authority in the Church, hath not either by himself, or by the Mediation of the Apostles, so defined or limited the aforesaid office of Presbyterate, as that it can be exercised no otherwise, than in the aforesaid subordination. If any one affirm that Christ hath so defined or limited it, it rests upon him to make proof of it.

If it be urged, that I have no power but what I received by the Ordainers: and that is a power of administering only in the aforesaid subordination. I answer, 1. I have already proved that by the very form of my ordination I received the office of a Pastor and Successor of the Apostles in their Pastoral office. 2. The Christ give the ordinary spiritual power, and particularly that of Presbyters in some respect by the mediation of men, yet he gives it not by them as giving the power, but as instruments either of designing the person to whom he gives it, or of the solemn investiture of that person, as the King is the immediate giver of the power of a Mayor in a Town Corporate, when he gives it by the mediation of the Electors, not as giving the power, but designing the person to be invested with it, or by the mediation of some officers as instruments of the solemn investiture. 3. Inasmuch as the ordainer or ordainers that designed me to this office of Christs Donation, could not by any act of theirs enlarge or lessen it as to its Nature or Essential State, or define it otherwise, than it is stated by Christ in his word; in case such words were pronounced out of the Book of ordination (I say not that they were, but in case they were) as import a lessening of the office in its essential state, they are void and null. If a Minister, that joyns a man and woman in Marriage according to the true intent of that ordinance, shall add other words that forbid the husband the government of his wife, that addition is a nullity.

2. I am not obliged by any Oath or Promise, to exercise my Ministry no otherwise than as in subordination to the Bishop of the Diocess.

I acknowledg that when I was ordain'd, I made those promissory Answers to the Bishops Interrogatories, which are contained in the Book of Ordination that then was. But, 1. let it be considered, that if the said interrogatories and answers, or any of them, superinduced any limitation upon the Office, that takes away any thing essential to it, ( I say not that they did, but in case they did ) they were nullities. 2. The promise then made to obey my Ordinary, and other chief Ministers to whom the government and charge over me is committed, concern me only as a Priestly standing in relation to the Bishop, as one of the Clergy of the Diocess, which I now am not, being cast out of that relation, and made incapable of it; and consequently the said capacity ceasing, the obligation ceaseth. 3. The said promise must be understood either unlimitedly, or with limitation; If unlimitedly, it was a foolish promise in the matter thereof, and therefore void; if with limitation, as in things lawful and honest, then I have not broken it; for it is not lawful nor honest for me to desist from fulfilling the Ministry that I have received, if the Ordinary so require. Nor am I obliged as aforesaid by being under the regulation of Authority. I freely acknowledg, that in the exercise of my Ministry I am not exempt from the Regulation of any just Superior Authority in the Church; as for the Civil Authority, it is afterwards to be spoken of. Whether it be by way of government, or of agreement. And I had much rather live under a Regulation, than not. But it cannot be supposed, that any Superior Authority can limit me to the prejudice of Christs Authority and interest, and the obligation that he hath laid upon me to discharge the Office with which he hath intrusted me. My Office is a Trust received from Christ, to be accounted for to him. I am his, and not the Bishops Minister. Let it be supposed, tho not granted, that the Bishop of the Diocess were my rightful Superior to Receive me in my Office; yet so high he could not so discharge my Office, and for me thereupon to discharge the preposterous Civil Authority, who would have me how to discharge the Charge he hath laid upon me, among the rest of his Ministers, in those words of St. Paul, Col. 4. 17. Take heed to the Ministry that thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it. If any shall say, That Christ hath

now forbidden me to exercise the Ministry, or discharged me from it, it behoves them to prove it, and I am ready to receive and consider any proof of it.

§ 3. *That I invade not the Right of the Diocesan Bishop in exercising the Ministry, where he claims the Right of being the Pastor.*

**H**ERE left my sense of Episcopacy be mistaken, I judge it necessary to premise, 1. That I fully own the Scripture-bishop, or Evangelical Pastor. 2. That I do not disown the Episcopacy that was of ancient Ecclesiastical custom in the time of Ignatius, yea or of Cyprian. 3. That Bishop Ushers Model of Church-government by Arch-bishops and bishops, with their Presbyters, was offered to his Majesty by the Divines of the Presbyterian persuasion (as they were called) for a ground-work of accommodation between the Bishops and them. And I assent to the offer which they made. 4. After the same manner I assent to the state of Episcopacy as described by R. Charles the first in his discourse touching the differences between Himself and the Two Houses in the point of Church-government, in these words: *That he is not against the managing of the Episcopal Presidency in one man, by the counsel and consent of many Presbyters; but that he had offered to restore it, as a fit means to avoid those errors, and corruptions, and partialities, which are incident to any one man; also to avoid Tyranny, which becomes no Christian, least of all Church-men; besides, it will be a means to take away that odium and burden of affairs which may lye too heavy on one mans shoulders; as he thought it did formerly on the Bishops here.*

But I do not as yet discern the divine Right of Episcopacy in the state and privileges thereof here following, wherein I desire information, and would gladly receive satisfaction, if there be such divine Rights indeed. None can be justly offended with me for examining in my own defence that Right which I am accused to have invaded.

I do

do not discern that a Bishop *infimi gradus*, I mean one that hath none under him but Parish-Ministers, who are pretended to have no Episcopal governing-power, I say I discern not that such a Bishop can by divine Right challenge to himself alone the Episcopal Authority over hundreds of particular Churches. For every particular Church should have its proper Pastor or Bishop.

And particular Churches with their proper Pastors, are so evidently of Divine Right, that some eminently learned men in the Church of *England* have declared their judgment, That no Form of Church-government besides the meer Pastoral Office and Church-assemblies, is prescribed in the Word of God, but may be various, according to the various condition and occasion of several Churches.

Neither do I discern, how it is possible for one man to do the work of a bishop towards hundreds of Churches, I mean the work of a bishop *infimi gradus*, under whom there are no subordinate Bishops or Pastors. For the work of such a bishop is to oversee all the Flock, to preach to them all, to baptize and confirm all that are to be baptized and confirmed, to administer the Lords Supper to all, to bless the Congregation, publicly and privately to admonish all as their need requires; to excommunicate the impenitent, to absolve the penitent, and that upon knowledge of their particular estate.

If such a Diocesan bishop saith, it sufficeth that he perform all this to the Flock by others, namely by the Parish-Ministers as his Curates, and by other Officers his Substitutes; it is answered, 1. That the Pastoral Authority is a personal trust. 2. It is desired that he shew his Commission from Christ the Prince of Pastors, to do his work by others; for I am now inquiring what is of divine, and not of humane Right. 3. None but a bishop can do the proper work of a bishop.

But if it be said, That the Parochial Congregations are not Churches, but only parts of the Diocess, which is the lowest particular Church: I desire proof from Scripture, That such Congregations as our Parishes, having their proper Presbyter or Presbyters invested with the power of the keys, are not particular Churches properly so called. The reason of my desire of this proof is, because the Scripture is a perfect Rule for the Essential constitution of Churches, tho accidents thereunto belonging may be



be regulated by humane prudence. 2. It is most evident in Scripture, that a particular Congregation of Christians, having their proper Pastor or Pastors, Presbyter or Presbyters, are Churches properly so called: And a Parochial Minister I conceive to be a Pastor or Elder according to the Scripture.

Moreover if a Diocess containing a hundred, two hundred, five hundred, or a thousand Parishes (as somewhere it doth) do constitute but one particular Church, and those particular Parishes be not properly to be accounted Churches, but only so many parts of that one Diocesan Church, why may not ten thousand, yea ten times ten thousand Parishes be likewise accounted but one particular Church, and brought under one man as sole Bishop or Pastor thereof?

In all this I have not argued against the right of an Arch-Bishop, or Overseer of other Bishops, such as *Titus* must needs be, if he were Bishop of *Crete*, where Bishops or Elders were to be ordained in every City. If either Scripture, or Prudence guided by Scripture, be for such an office, I oppose it not, and nothing here spoken makes against it.

If our Diocesan Bishops be in very deed Arch-Bishops or Overseers of inferior Bishops, to wit, Parish-Ministers, I do not here argue against it, but only say, that in their Archiepiscopal Diocess or Province they cannot exercise their authority any other-wise than according to the rules of Gods word for the edification and peace of the Church, and that they cannot discharge the inferior Bishops from their obligation to Christ, whose immediate Ministers and Stewards they are, and to whom they are immediately accountable.

Moreover I do not discern that any Bishop can by divine right so challenge or claim such a circuit of ground for his Diocess (as for example the County of *Sussex*) as that thereupon he can by the said right prohibit all other Pastors whatsoever to do the work of the Ministry in any case without his licence within such a circuit of ground, or that such a measure of ground is related to his Episcopal office as a propriety for government Ecclesiastical like as certain territories and dominions are as a propriety in reference to Civil government, related to the temporal Sovereignty of a Prince.



The partition of one Church from another by local bounds, is not of divine institution, but of humane prudence from the convenience of the things, I say convenience, not absolute necessity; And the state of things may be such as to compel to vary from it in some particulars.

It is supposed by learned men, that in the Apostles times there were several Churches at *Rome* under their several Bishops or Pastors in the same local bounds, as one of the Circumcision, and another of the Uncircumcision. And if it were not so *de facto*, I think few will deny but that it lawfully might have been so.

If upon the aforesaid diversity of condition in the persons, namely, as being of different nations and languages, there may be several Churches under several Bishops or Pastors within the same local bounds, why not also upon other diversity of condition, which may render them as incapable of being of the same particular Church, as if they were of divers nations? One instance may be an unmovable diversity of persuasions about points of Religion.

As for example, Why may not *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* of the same nation, town or village, have their several Churches under their several Pastors, and live in peace? Nothing could hinder the said peace, but want of Christian Humility and Charity. And consequently, why among us may not Christians that have invincible diversity of persuasions in matters of Church Government live peaceably within the same precincts in their several Churches?

Besides all this, if the local bounds assigned for one mans immediate Pastoral charge be so vast, and the multitude of Souls therein be so great as to render it impossible for any one man to fulfil that charge towards them, can it be judged an usurpation against divine right, if another Pastor without license from him should perform ministerial service within those bounds? Likewise let it be considered what may or may not be done, in any circuit of ground where the inhabitants are destitute of competent provision for their Souls, and are neglected by such as claim the Pastoral charge over them. Is it an intrusion or usurpation, if in that case one that is dedicated to the work of the Ministry shall endeavour without licence from the said neglecters, by preaching and other ministerial service to save souls that are so exposed?

Furthermore, let it be considered how any Clergy-man can be the proper pastor of a people, that doth not the work of a pastor towards them, which work I have before set forth.

Lastly, I cast in this consideration also, how any Clergy-man can be the proper pastor to a people against their wills: I doubt not but a people may sin, yea, greatly sin in not receiving a pastor duly offered to them, and so they may as greatly sin by receiving such a pastor as may be imposed on them. But how any one can actually bear the pastoral relation to a people, that never consented to that relation, I would be better informed.

Thus it hath been examined, whether I am culpable by trespassing against the divine right or rights of a Diocesan Bishop in exercising the Ministry where he claims the right of being pastor. And it hath been examined in that form, which the matter being a tender point is capable of. As for his humane rights, they are his preeminence and jurisdiction under the King as Supreme, and to which he is intituled by the Law of the Land. Now I am no usurper against this; for I claim no such preeminence, I exercise no such jurisdiction. As for my obedience to his jurisdiction as an officer subordinate to the King, it shall be spoken of in its own place.

§ 4. *That I do not violate any true bonds of Church-Unity, nor in any respect cause divisions and offences.*

**T**HE Case of Schism now in controverſie is not to be huddled up, but well ſtated, whereunto many conſiderations are prerequisite. Thoſe that are ſet down, I take to be of moment: but the expreſs application of them, I forbear, and doubt not but the conſidering and impartial Reader will excuſe me therein; and judg that he himſelf can eaſily do that part with more convenience than I can in this writing. Church-Unity is not to be built upon the doctrines and ordinances of men, but upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt being the chief corner ſtone; and none are to be ſhut out from the Communion of the Church,

Church, or the work of the Ministry, whom Christ hath not excluded, but qualified and called thereunto according to the Scriptures which are the rule of admission and exclusion from the said priviledges.

2. The unity of the spirit, which we are charged to keep in the bond of peace, is not concord in external forms and orders without participation of the same new nature, and walking in the same holy way. It is said *Eph. 4.* One body, and one spirit, and one hope, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all; but not one ceremony, one posture of body, one garb of Church-ornaments, one habit of vestments, one ritual and unity of assent to all opinions and formalities: An holy fellowship in the spirit of grace, and in the life of faith and love, is far more excellent than the greatest compliance in ceremonies and unnecessary doctrines of doubtful disputations, and consequently, is far more regardable in that estimation and reception of persons either for Church-Communion, or the holy Ministry.

Touching Schism, let this be noted: It is not Secular power and interest, that of it self can constitute a true Church or Pastor, nor can it excuse those that are born up by it from Schism when they act Schismatically, and do all that they can to continue the snares of division; neither are all they without more a do to be accounted Schismatics who are destitute of Secular power, and who cannot in all points observe the commandments of men, or neglect to give their necessary help in Christs service, when they are forbidden of men.

Schism is the causing of divisions in or from the Church, as the Apostle sets it forth *Rom. 16. 17.* Mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine that ye have learned: And let them be marked indeed whosoever they are. The guilt of it lies as much upon those that make unwarrantable separations; and they are most culpable that are the chief causes of the division; and such are they, who impose unlawful terms of Church-Communion and Ministerial liberty, and they also that rigorously impose such terms thereof, as Christ and his Apostles never warranted them to impose, either expressly or by consequence.

Let the case of such as are cast and kept out of a Church by wrong sentence, or by imposition of unlawful terms of communion, or unnecessary terms, that are unlawful to them by unremovable doubts of conscience, be considered, for such a case may be:

What shall they do? Must the unrighteousness of others be a perpetual bar to them against the enjoyment of those privileges, to which they have a right before God? Why may they not lawfully enjoy Gods ordinances in distinct assemblies, if they hold them peaceably and charitably?

Let the case of such Ministers as are cast and kept out of the Ministry by the imposition of unlawful terms, or unnecessary terms that are unlawful to them by unremoveable doubts of conscience, be considered, for this case also may be: What shall they do when they are under an obligation to Christ to fulfil their Ministry; and when the necessities of souls make theirs, as well as others ministry to be necessary, and when all the help that can possibly be given both by them and by those that dissent from them, is little enough? Every pastor tho he be under the publick judgment of Superiors, hath a judgment of discretion also (that is to say, a right of discerning) about his own call and obligation to this service.

Let it be here also considered, whether the necessary means of saving souls, such as is the due preaching of the Gospel, be not incomparably more precious than uniformity in matters of opinion and ceremony, and accidental order.

There is a great difference between inimical segregation, like sedition in a Commonwealth, and a going severally upon weighty reasons, and without breach of charity: And among other weighty reasons this may be one, That all Christians of sound faith and good life, that are dissatisfied about some humane injunctions and orders in a Church, may not for lack of tender regard towards them, be utterly abandoned and exposed to be led aside into the errors of the wicked, as to heresy, apostacy or a course of irreligion.

It is in the power of Rulers to grant this Indulgence to such Dissenters, when it is not in the power of Dissenters to change their Judgments. And this is not to set up Church against Church, or according to an ancient manner of speaking, Altar against Altar, but only either occasional and temporary Assemblies, or at the most but divers Churches distinguished by their several places of Assembling, as one Parish-church from another; and by diversity of External Order, as the allowed Congregations of Foreigners in London from the Parish churches. The same true Religion for the substance thereof, is exercised, and the same holy ends

are pursued in the one and the other. And there will be no opposition between them, but what an unchristian Enmity proceeding from Worldly lusts and interests will produce.

If any object the inconveniencies that may follow the permitting of Church-Assemblies besides those of the established Order, I have this to reply: 1. Our Rulers may so provide, if the Clergy would ~~not~~ gainsay, that few may stand in need of that permission, in comparison of those that now do; and the way is to fix the terms of Church-communion and Ministerial Liberty, so as to comprehend all sober Protestants; and this is done by requiring no more as necessary to the one or the other, than what Christ hath made necessary thereunto. 2. After such Comprehension settled, the Toleration of all tolerable Dissenters within such limits as will secure publick peace and safety, is more agreeable to the wisdom and clemency of Rulers, and the charity of Christians, than the Rigorous constraining of the said Dissenters to what they cannot bear, and the restraining of them from the liberty of serving God according to their consciences. 3. But if the present state of things must continue, the inconveniencies that may follow the present practise of the Protestant Nonconformists, are far less than what will follow the deserting of their Ministry, and the neglect of souls in so great a need of their help.

The considerations foregoing I submit to the judgment of impartial Readers, in reference to the case of Protestant Nonconformists, of whom I am. Moreover, I judg it necessary to give some account of my own principles and practise. I have not wilfully forsaken my Ministerial station in the established Order, but am driven from it. I am ready to make Oath before any that have power to administer it to me, That my conscience is not satisfied, that it is lawful to observe all the terms that are imposed. Let it be noted, That I do not affirm the unlawfulness of the terms; but that they are unlawful to me in regard of my conscience, and I am ready to render Reasons of my dissatisfaction. It hath been alledged, That so much hath been written for Conformity, as may satisfy any that have a mind to be satisfied: But I profess in his sight, who knows my heart, That I have a mind to be satisfied if I knew how.

I set up no Faction or severed Party against the common interest of Religion; but according to my mean ability I seek the edification, peace and concord of all Christians of all persuasions, and the



encrease of true godliness among them all.

I renounce not Parochial Churches as no true Churches; I have not forsaken the communion of such Churches, nor encouraged others to forsake them; but have communicated with them in the Worship of God, and so shall do: and this my principle and practice I am not sparing to declare to my friends that are of another mind in this particular. Nevertheless where a Parish Minister is utterly unmeet for the charge of souls, I cannot encourage any to commit the charge of their souls to him. But as for all conscientious and faithful Conformists, I highly prize them for their works sake, and seek to promote their Reputation, and the success of their Labours.

I will thankfully accept the liberty of Ministerial employment in the said Churches, when it shall be granted me. And for the obtaining of my liberty, I am ready to submit not only to whatsoever is *in specie* or particularly enjoined in Gods word, but to whatsoever is necessary *in genere*, and left *in specie* to humane determination, if it be determined according to the general Rules of Gods Word.

I have given an account of my self according to the latitude of my own principles; but I have not done it to the prejudice of others that are of sound faith and good life, but of narrower principles touching *Church-government*; for by the considerations here propounded, their due liberty is provided for.

### § 5. *That I do not violate the Authority of the Civil Magistrate.*

I AM licensed by the King to be a Teacher, and to teach in any place licensed and allowed by him. His Majesty hath declared the same to be grounded on his Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs. In the last Law against Conventicles it is provided, That neither that Act, nor any thing contained therein, shall extend to invalidate or avoid his Majesty's Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs. Of my License granted by his Majesty, there hath been no Revocation that I know of. If upon Reasons of State it hath seemed good to his Majesty to grant no more Licenses since such a time



a time, I do not see that it follows thereupon that he hath made void the Licenses that he hath granted.

His Majesty hath graciously declared, *That he had seen better effects of one years Indulgence, than of many years severity before that time.*

Tho the Parliament were dissatisfied in the way of the Kings granting the Indulgence; yet they approved the thing it self, and accordingly passed a Bill for the grant of it; tho by occasion of their speedy Recess it passed not into a Law.

It appears that the Parliament hath the matter of Indulgence, or Liberty to Dissenters, still under consideration, by the Bill of Comprehension, which at their last meeting was voted in the House of Lords, with the concurrence of divers Bishops; but their Prorogation hindered the compleating thereof.

Now when this is the sense both of King and Parliament about this matter, I humbly hope that our Superiors will take it into their prudent consideration, and be favourable to honest and peaceable people under their Jurisdiction.

But supposing, tho not granting, that my License is not in force; I proceed to some other considerations.

I acknowledg the Kings Supremacy in all causes, and over all persons Civil and Ecclesiastical.

As the power given to Spiritual Pastors, is declared in Scripture to be given for edification, and not for destruction; so the power given to the Civil Magistrate in matters Ecclesiastical, is given to the same intent.

As in Naturals, the inferior subordinate causes have no power of acting against the efficacy of the Superior; so in Morals the inferior Ruler hath no authority against the Superior. Therefore if Magistrates, being all of them subordinate to God, shall command any thing contrary to his Law, such their command cannot beget an obligation on the subject to fulfil it, tho the subject must not Resist their power.

The Civil Magistrate, notwithstanding his Authority in Ecclesiasticks, cannot discharge any Minister of the Gospel from the exercise of his Ministry in those circumstances wherein Christ commands him to exercise it.

The Civil Magistrate is to judg what laws are fit for him to enact and execute about Ecclesiastical matters, and the Ministers of the Gospel have a right of discerning, which is called a judgment of dis-

discretion, about their own pastoral acts, what they ought, and what they ought not to do, according to Gods word, otherwise they must be held obliged to a Blind, Popish, Brutish Obedience.

But whatsoever the Ministers discern to be their duty to do, they ought to do the same only in such ways as are consistent with their Loyalty to God and the King.

The Bishop hath no external jurisdiction in his publick Courts, but what is derived from the King as Supream; and the Ecclesiastical Laws, by which the Bishop is to proceed, are the Kings Ecclesiastical Laws. Consequently no Minister, that lives under any Bishops Jurisdiction which is but derived, can be obliged to obey the Bishop proceeding in his Court, any further than he is obliged to obey the King, who hath the supreme jurisdiction under God and Christ, and that is no further than is consistent with obedience to God.

**I** Presented this clear and open defence with desire and expectation of his Lordships answer in writing according to his promise, ( as I apprehended ) but he refused to receive it. I trust through the grace of God, that I am ready to renounce any error, whereof I shall be convicted, and to receive any truth that shall be made manifest to me. And I give this account before men in the sense of that great account which I must give to the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, who searcheth the hearts and reins, and will give unto every one according to his works.

FIN IS

*Several Tracts not yet Printed, prepared for the Press, and left under Mr. John Corbet's own hand-writing, intended shortly to be published, are as follows.*

1. **T**HE true State of the Ancient Episcopacy.
2. The present Ecclesiastical Government, compared with the Ancient Episcopacy.
3. A Consideration of the present State of Conformity in the Church of *England*.
4. A Discourse of the Church. and of the Ministry thereof.
5. A Tract of Certainty and Infallibility.
6. Of divine Worship, in three parts; 1. Of the Nature, Kinds, Parts, and Adjuncts of Divine Worship. 2. Of Idolatry.
3. Of Superstition less than Idolatry.
7. Matrimonial Purity.

*Those already lately Printed of Mr. John Corbet's, are,*

1. Kingdom of God among men, with a A Discourse of Church-Unity and Schism. 8o.
2. Self-Employment in secret.
3. An Account given of the Principles and Practises of several Nonconformists.
4. An humble endeavour of some plain and brief Explication of the Decrees and Operations of God about the free Actions of Men. More especially of the Operations of Divine Grace.